THE

CHURCH OF SAINT SIFFRID.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF NED EVANS.

Non mesto, non valor, non riverenza
Nè d'età nè di grado, nè di legge;
Non peno di vergogna; non rispetto
Nè d'amor nè di sangue; non memoria
Di ricevuto ben, nè finalmente
Cosa si venerabile, o si santa,
O si giusto esser può, ch'a quella vasta
Cupidigia d'honori, a quella ingorda
Fama d'aver, violabil sia.

GUARINI.

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THE

CHURCH OF SAINT SIFFRID.

CHAP. I.

The Norman race, the ſons of mighty Rollo,
Who, ruſhing in a tempeſt from the North,
Great nurſe of generous freemen, bravely won
With their own ſwords their ſeats, and ſtill poſſeſs them.

THOMSON.

SIBILLA was anxiouſly waiting the return of the ſervant from the poſt-office, in expectation of receiving an anſwer to a letter, when Mr. Harwood entered the breakfaſt-room with an open one in his hand.

"Here is an invitation from your father, Sibilla," ſaid he, throwing it on the table, and endeavouring to look grave. Mrs. Harwood glanced her eyes over the writing, and, burſting into a laugh, "What can my father poſſibly mean?" cried ſhe. "To bring all the ſervants in their beſt liveries! and to be at the Caſtle exactly at eight o'clock on Thurſday morning!"

"Some new way of keeping up ancient Welch hoſpitality, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Harwood,

laughing too. "You know your father never does any thing in which his manſion or his name is not concerned; perhaps he intends we ſhall be preſent at a meeting of the bards, or perhaps he expects the accompliſhment of Talieſſin's prophecy; or, for any thing I know, he may have proclaimed a tournament in honour of Ethelreda's beauty!—But I ſhall take a ride on the hills this charming morning; will you come, Sibilla?"

Without waiting for an anſwer, Harwood, catching up his hat, walked towards the ſtables, followed by his lady.

The character of Sir Roger L'Eſterling, ſo ludicrouſly ſketched by Mr. Harwood, was by no means caricatured; but it will be neceſſary, in order to juſtify in ſome degree its eccentricity, and the veneration in which he held his deſcent, to mention the long line of his anceſtors, and to give ſome deſcription of his ſplendid and venerable habitation, erected, as he often boaſted, ſome centuries before the Chriſtian æra, and confeſſedly the moſt ancient in the principality.

St. Siffrid's Caſtle, one of thoſe beſtowed by William the Conqueror on his followers, fell to the lot of Reginald L'Eſterling, a Norman knight; the forefather, in a direct line, of the preſent poſſeſſor. It was ſituated cloſe to the ſea, and ſurrounded by walls of incredible ſtrength. The entrance to the caſtle was defended by a ditch and draw-bridge, which gave admiſſion to a ſpacious out-court. Beyond preſented itſelf a gateway under two towers, whoſe ponderous gate and port-cullis ſtill ſeemed to preclude a nearer approach. Through this court appeared another, overgrown with graſs, and ſurrounded by the apartments of the Caſtle: the grand hall; the ſplendid rooms adorned with crimſon grown black from

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from age, with fringes of antique manufacture; galleries, in which bats and owls had long obtained a footing; narrow towers and ſtone belfries, whoſe mouldering outſides gave decided proof of their high antiquity.

Behind theſe gloomy apartments, the delight and pride of their owner, lay the gardens of the Caſtle. Theſe conſiſted of ſeven or eight, of a large ſize, one below the other; each terminated by a graſs terrace which communicated to the next by a flight of ſtone ſteps; the loweſt of which was defended from the ſea by a kind of wharf, againſt which the waves daſhed at high tides with aſtoniſhing noiſe and fury. Tall elms, yews, and twiſted thorns, with a few old but ragged myrtles, and ſome apple trees, were all that flouriſhed in the Caſtle gardens; which, blown by the wind, and continually wetted by the ſpray of the ſea, were quite bare on that ſide; bowing their old and almoſt leafleſs heads towards the Caſtle, whoſe battlements and turrets appeared proudly to overlook them, and defy the ravages of age and the fury of the ſtorm.

On the ſouth ſide of the Caſtle, in a deep vale, lay the Church of St. Siffrid, which had once been a cathedral; and the ruins of a cloiſ[illegible] half obſcured by trees. Here the L'Eſterlings were depoſited from father to ſon in uninterrupted ſucceſſion; except one, who died on his return from a pilgrimage to Jeruſalem. Above the church the ground roſe ſuddenly, covered with trees, many of which, though quite dead and leafleſs, ſtill erected their dry branches to be felled by time alone. This wood almoſt ſkirted a large deer park, in one part of which a lofty watch-tower added much to the beauty of the ſurrounding ſcenery.

In this domain, in the unbounded antiquity of his name, and, above all, in being born a Welchman, Sir Roger placed all his happineſs; and knew no ſublunary joy, no terreſtrial glory, equal to maintaining the character of hoſpitality, ſo juſtly the right of his nation.

A fortune of ten thouſand pounds a-year was not more than equal to the expence of almoſt maintaining half the county; conſequently Sir Roger was ſometimes more than ready for his rents. But theſe ſlight inconveniencies were forgotten when the gentry were ſeated at the upper end of the hall, raiſed by a ſtep above the vaſſals; when the *cwrw* was praiſed vociferouſly from every mouth, and the harpers from the gallery at the lower end ſung to their inſtruments lively romances of the middle ages, in their native tongue.

But even in theſe moments of ſupreme felicity, Sir Roger ſometimes felt the inſufficiency of human happineſs. When he ſurveyed his hall, his banners, his vaſſals, his minſtrels, the noble arms of L'Eſterling emblazoned on his windows; he lamented with bitterneſs, that with the world in general they had loſt their conſequence; and that to hold a plenary court, or to proclaim a tournament, was utterly impoſſible.

Till he married Miſs L'Eſterling, Mr. Harwood reſided chiefly in London. The family ſeat had paſſed from the hands of its original poſſeſſor into thoſe of an old uncle, whoſe penurious diſpoſition had at length enabled him to purchaſe it of his nephew, whoſe circumſtances forbade his living in it. The money ariſing from the ſale was appropriated to pay the electioneering debts of the elder Mr. Harwood, who had quitted this world bitterly regretting his impaired eſtate and alienated manſion. With five hundred

dred pounds a-year, all the remains of a noble fortune, Charles Harwood had his reſidence to chooſe. Living in Wales perfectly ſuited his diſpoſition; he enjoyed the beauty of the country; and firmly reſolving the example of his more opulent neighbours ſhould never lead him into expences, with the acquieſcence of his wife he fixed on a ſmall but comfortable houſe in a ſolitary and beautiful ſituation. Here he ſometimes amuſed himſelf with ſtrolling on the banks of a romantic river, or in the thick ſhade liſtened to the murmuring of its caſcades; ſometimes, leſs indolently inclined, he aſcended the almoſt perpendicular hills that roſe behind his houſe, from whence might be diſcerned the ſea, and blue mountains ſcarcely diſtinguiſhable from the ſky itſelf.

In this ſolitude Mr. Harwood and his wife never repined at the ſcantineſs of their ſociety; ſince their two boys, the eldeſt two years old, were to them the moſt engaging companions.

CHAP. II.

Quem tumulum Nili, quem Tybridis abluat unda.
Quæritur, et ducibus tantum de funere pugna eſt.
LUCAN. Pharſ. lib. 6.

ON the morning appointed by Sir Roger, Mr. and Mrs. Harwood left Kilgaren in a new poſt-chaiſe which had been lately added to their domeſtic eſtabliſhment, accompanied by their ſervants on horſeback, according to the letter of the Baron's invitation. As they had twenty miles to go

go before eight, the carriage had been ordered at five. When deſcending the hill, they met a poſtillion from the Caſtle, with an additional pair of horſes. Not much ſurpriſed (for that the Baronet was impatient was nothing new), they made no enquiries of the man, who, they ſoon perceived by the extraordinary manner in which he drove, had received poſitive orders not to loiter on the road.

At the time appointed, or rather before, the chaiſe drove into the outer court. The porters, in new liveries, invited them to join their maſter, who waited to conduct them into the Caſtle. With ſmiles he could ſcarcely contain, Sir Roger welcomed his viſitors. "You are very late, Harwood; I expected you at eight, and now I imagine it cannot be far from eleven?"

"Eleven, Sir!" cried Harwood with aſtoniſhment.

"Yes;" ſaid Sir Roger, "but I may be miſtaken; we proceeded entirely by gueſs, the morning was too cloudy to allow us to ſee the hour by the ſun-dial in the court; clocks and watches, you know, I never truſt—an idle invention! So that, after waiting, as I thought, till nine, I grew impatient, and ordered the ceremony to be performed. But come into the breakfaſt-room, let me introduce you to the bride and bridegroom."

"A tenant's wedding, I ſuppoſe!" ſaid Harwood to his wife, as they followed Sir Roger into the room; where from the upper end came forward to meet them a tall and rather elegant-looking young man, and Ethelreda L'Eſterling. Mrs. Harwood, dumb with aſtoniſhment, embraced her ſiſter, introduced to her by Sir Roger, as Mrs. Carloville. The ſame ceremony repeated with her new brother, Mrs. Harwood was

was invited to take her place at the breakfaſt table, at which the bride preſided. The ſilence that at firſt prevailed was embarraſſing to the whole party; but particularly ſo to Mr. Carloville, who ſaw the grave faces of his relations, and could not but gueſs the ſurpriſe and perhaps the diſlike his appearance, and ſudden connection with them, their opinion not conſulted, might occaſion.

"I am ſorry, ſir," ſaid Ethelreda, who had made the ſame obſervation in her own mind; "I am quite vexed you did not think proper to let my ſiſter know your intentions with reſpect to me, ſome time ſince; I ſhould at leaſt have had the ſatisfaction of her preſence earlier this morning."

"And I ſhould not have had the ſatisfaction of enjoying her ſurpriſe," cried Sir Roger. "But I had almoſt forgotten to tell you one thing, Harwood; a circumſtance it is that gives me more real pleaſure than any thing that has occurred ſince your marriage. You know it has always been my wiſh, that the whole family of the L'Eſterlings ſhould be married, chriſtened, and buried, in St. Siffrid's church. This has literally been the caſe with all but that pious and unfortunate knight Sir Ralph, who died and was buried in the city of Famaguſta, on his return from the Holy Land."

"I lament it ſincerely, ſir," ſaid Harwood, whilſt Sir Roger pauſed with tears in his eyes.

"But my dear ſon Carloville," continued he, "has promiſed that he himſelf will take the journey, on purpoſe to bring back the bones of my pious anceſtor; and indeed I am the more ſanguine in this undertaking, as I know there is amongſt the archives of the Caſtle, though, to ſay the truth, I have never ſeen it, a ſmall manuſcript

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deſcribing the very ſpot. It was brought to Sir Edward, the ſon of the deceaſed, by a pilgrim who was preſent at the funeral."

"Really, Sir Roger," cried Carloville gaily, "theſe are additional circumſtances in favour of the probability of ſucceeding"—Harwood ſtopped him, by a grave ſtare of ſurpriſe, from proceeding.

"I was once," ſaid Sir Roger, purſuing the ſubject, "cheated by an Italian who came to take views: he heard me lament the abſence of my predeceſſor from the family-vault, and, enquiring where he was buried, pretended to have ſeen his tomb: the manuſcript was therefore an unneceſſary appendage to the journey he undertook to perform for five hundred pounds. I conſole myſelf, however, with the idea of ſtill poſſeſſing the manuſcript."

"Why, my dear ſir?" ſaid Ethelreda, "I do not perceive what loſs the manuſcript could poſſibly have been; for I do not imagine Mr. Carloville will be able to underſtand, or even read, a ſingle ſyllable of it!"

"That, Ethelreda, is an objection I have long foreſeen; and having made the more obſolete part of the language my principal ſtudy, I will immediately ſet about tranſlating this invaluable manuſcript, for which the learned pilgrim, we have it upon record in our family, would only accept a ſilver crucifix which belonged to the deceaſed knight. If I remember right, he was deſcended by the mother's ſide from the great Glendourwys; his father, Rice ap Fowa, was very highly deſcended too, and a man of known military ſkill, as the Edwards found to their coſt; Howel ap Rice, the pilgrim, wrote the moſt correct Welch of his time; his father's armorial bearings were a bend argent on a field gules; the ſon

added

added three bezants or, in commemoration of their ſervices againſt the infidels."

Neither of Sir Roger's ſons was herald or genealogiſt, and of courſe totally diſqualified for joining in the diſcourſe; and though Harwood knew very well, it was only to mention Byzantium to bring on the origin of all the armorial bearings in Chriſtendom, he was not ſufficiently in temper to enter on Sir Roger's favourite topic, and provoke a diſcuſſion that would moſt probably have laſted till the evening-bell of the Caſtle tolled for prayers.

Sir Roger was ſilent a few moments; then riſing from his chair with a ſigh, he invited his ſons to accompany him into the park, leaving Ethelreda and Sibilla in poſſeſſion of the breakfaſt-room.

"You are ſurpriſed at my marriage, my dear Sibilla?" ſaid Mrs. Carloville, looking at her ſiſter.

"I am indeed, Ethelreda. But I am ſtill more ſurpriſed that you ſhould not have written to me on the ſubject: you uſed to think five years' difference in our age entitled me to give advice on ſubjects of infinitely leſs importance."

"Nor have I changed my opinion, my dear ſiſter; but I was abſolutely forbidden to write to you; and you know how well my father expects and deſerves to be obeyed."

"You cannot have known Mr. Carloville long, Ethelreda! It is ſcarcely three months ſince we left the Caſtle; I do not recollect even hearing his name then."

"I have known him but three weeks," ſaid Ethelreda.

"And you are married to him!"

"Dear Sibilla, what could I poſſibly do to avoid it? One would really conclude you did not know my father! Mr. Carloville was very well introduced;

introduced; he is the ſon of Lord Carloville of Ireland, and heir to a large eſtate. In one week, I believe he propoſed himſelf to my father, who, I would venture to ſay, his family out of the queſtion, had never liſtened to him but in hopes of getting Sir Ralph's bones from Famaguſta.—— I remonſtrated with my father," continued Ethelreda, "and pleaded my extreme youth; he would hear nothing againſt the marriage. 'You are ſeventeen, Ethelreda; my father married the Lady Onoria Albizi, at fourteen, when he was in Florence.'—There was nothing to object to ſuch an argument, you know," continued ſhe gaily. "Beſides, it appears to me that Carloville and I ſhall agree tolerably well; I will come and live near you and Harwood, where there is no great probability of meeting with any one who can rival him, either in perſon or manner.—But, to ſpeak the truth, I have a little recovered my temper; I was vexed at not being allowed to wait ſome time longer, and make my own election."

"I have too good an opinion of your principles, Ethelreda," replied Mrs. Harwood gravely, "to have any fears for your future deportment: follow your mother's admirable example, and you will not fail to be happy; that is, you will have no cauſe to reproach yourſelf."

The marriage of Ethelreda had been celebrated at the Caſtle with all poſſible ſplendour. For more than a fortnight nothing was heard but the ſounds of revelling. The dance, the ſong, the muſic of the harp, had promoted feſtivity in the great hall, where all the tenants and nearly all the county had drunk the health of the new-married pa. and a long life to Sir Roger, till they could ſcarcely ſtand. The whole neighbourhood had viſited and felicitated Mr. and Mrs. Carloville; Sir Roger himſelf, forgetting plenary courts, and the

the far-diſtant bones of Sir Ralph, declared he was truly happy.

Mrs. Harwood, who thought every moment an age that ſhe was ſeparated from her children, had propoſed to her huſband to return. Mr. Harwood, who wiſhed to know ſomething more of his brother-in-law than he could learn from Sir Roger, in the mean time, at all convenient opportunities, had been making enquiries in the neighbourhood, which however he forbore to communicate to any one.

Mr. Carloville had been on recruiting ſervice at the next town, and was introduced at St. Siffrid's by Lord Caerleon; who having unfortunately left the country for his winter reſidence (it was now October), Harwood could gain no information with reſpect to his character, that was either deciſive or ſatisfactory. In this ſituation were affairs at the Caſtle, when Harwood, in compliance with his wife's requeſt and his own inclination, informed Sir Roger L'Eſterling of his intended return to Kilgaren. This propoſal was ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by him, at leaſt for ſome days, that Harwood reluctantly gave up the point, and agreed to hunt the next morning with ſome gentlemen of the neighbourhood.

Sir Roger, who, though in the fifty-third year of his age, was ſtill attached to all the ſports of his youth, determined at all events to be of the party, and was ſoon the firſt after the hounds.—Harwood, perceiving his horſe was too powerful, followed at full ſpeed; but before he could overtake him, or even come within hearing, the horſe ſtumbled, fell, and roſe again, leaving his unfortunate maſter dead upon the ground. The diſtreſſed Harwood ſaw Roger's fall; but, thinking he was only ſtunned, he ſent a ſervant to unhinge a gate; and placing him upon it, ſupported by the

diſmounted

diſmounted party, he diſpatched another for the neareſt ſurgeon, whilſt he himſelf rode forward to the Caſtle, from which they were not very diſtant.

But the horſe had already preceded him to the Caſtle; and the ſad cataſtrophe of Sir Roger's death was without any preparation made known to his daughters. When Harwood arrived, he found them in a ſtate of diſtraction and agony difficult to deſcribe or alleviate; but yet not without hopes, which he unfortunately confirmed; ſo that when the body arrived, and the ſurgeon that attended it declared the certainty of his death, the lamentations and ſorrows of the ſervants, who affectionately loved their maſter, were joined with thoſe of his daughters as if they had each loſt a father; and they were too much occupied with grief to afford the ladies any aſſiſtance, who, fainting and almoſt dying, had ſcarcely begun to feel the extent of their misfortune, or be ſenſible of their loſs.

It was however neceſſary that Mr. L'Eſterling, the heir of the title and eſtate, ſhould be immediately made acquainted with his uncle's death, that he might be preſent at the interment; a mournful taſk that of courſe devolved on Mr. Harwood.

The body, according to the family cuſtom, was embalmed; and had lain in ſtate in the great hall, which was hung with black and all the quarters of the L'Eſterling arms, for two days. On the evening of the third, the melancholy party, whom no ſound had diſturbed but the evening bell of the Caſtle, was rouſed from a profound ſilence by the rattling of wheels in the outer court. In a few minutes the door of the drawing-room opened; and the voice of a gentleman giving orders

to

to his valet in French prepared them for the entrance of Mr. L'Eſterling, now Sir Francis.

The ladies, from their father's deſcription, for they had ſeen him but ſeldom, who held his nephew in the higheſt contempt, were prejudiced againſt his perſon and manners. With hair quite flaxen, a pale complexion, the moſt ridiculous foppiſhneſs of dreſs and manners, and of diminutive ſize, Sir Francis was not calculated to remove their prejudices, or conciliate their eſteem.

"I have the honour of addreſſing myſelf to my couſins, I preſume?" ſaid Sir Francis, profoundly bowing to each. They only curtſied. "May I not take the liberty of requeſting to be introduced to theſe gentlemen," turning towards Mr. Harwood; "my relations, I imagine?"

"My name, ſir, is Harwood, and that lady," pointing to Mrs. Harwood, "is my wife. Mr. Carloville, Sir Francis——who has been married three weeks to Miſs Ethelreda L'Eſterling; a circumſtance of which I preſume you are already informed."

"I was very ſeldom informed of any thing that occurred at the Caſtle," cried Sir Francis, gaping; "but my couſin Ethelreda married!" addreſſing himſelf to Mrs. Carloville; "I am really ſorry—"

"I am really extremely obliged to you, ſir," ſaid Carloville with ſharpneſs, breaking a ſilence he had maintained for ſome hours; "and ſo I do not doubt is my wife!"

"You are not angry with *me*, I hope, ſir?"—ſaid Ethelreda, rather piqued at his tone of voice.

"You cannot be at a loſs for the anſwer to your queſtion, madam,"—he replied in the ſame tone, and leaving the room as he ſpoke.

Sir Francis followed Carloville with eyes that expreſſed his aſtoniſhment; then turning them towards

towards Ethelreda with curioſity, ſeemed to aſk the reaſon of this quarrel: no one however was diſpoſed to give him any information; and the doleful ſilence would have laſted for ever, but for the entrance of a ſervant who came to announce the ſupper. Sir Francis, ſeizing the opportunity of an eſcort, for which he had long been waiting, haſtily withdrew; after bidding the ladies good night, declaring he could no longer ſupport the fatigue he felt from this journey, which was more intolerable than croſſing the Pyrenees or Apennines.

In the paſſage waited La Jeuneſſe for his maſter, but not alone; for the ſervants had taken pains to terrify him with ſtories of apparitions, whilſt he inwardly determined and impatiently waited an opportunity of repeating them to Sir Francis, to whom he knew nothing would prove ſo powerful an incentive towards his ſpeedy departure, as the moſt diſtant expectation of viſitors from the other world.

The chamber into which the new baronet was ſhewn was not badly calculated to aſſiſt the deſigns of La Jeuneſſe—a room almoſt as large as the aiſle of a church, hung with tapeſtry ſo dark that ſcarcely was the deſign diſcernible; a bed of the moſt antique form, over which was ſuſpended at a great height, from the fretted ceiling, a canopy ſuſtaining long curtains of what once was crimſon trimmed with gilt leather; and, to complete the ſcene, ſeveral full-length portraits were hung where the tapeſtry had deſerted its ſtation, amongſt which were two admirable likeneſſes of the late Sir Roger and his lady.

On his firſt entrance Sir Francis ſtarted back: "How is this, La Jeuneſſe? Whither are they ſhewing us?" cried he with looks of horror——

He

He turned to ſpeak to his conductor, but he was out of hearing.

"Mon Dieu! Je ne ſçais!" replied La Jeuneſſe with deſpair in his countenance. "On m'a aſſuré cependant, qu'on alloit vous préparer la meilleure appartement du Chateau."

"It cannot poſſibly be this then! Ring the bell, La Jeuneſſe."

Here La Jeuneſſe informed his diſmayed maſter, that there were no bells in the Caſtle, as the ſervants had previouſly warned him. "On m'a dit auſſi qu'il y ait partout des reveneurs; c'eſt ici l'appartement du feu Chevalier," continued La Jeuneſſe.

"My uncle's room!" cried Sir Francis with increaſed fright. "Then we have one wing of the Caſtle entirely to ourſelves! Let us find our way back."

Here La Jeuneſſe remonſtrated, declaring it was an utter impoſſibility; and fearful of wandering all night amongſt long galleries, where bats flitted over his head as he paſſed through them, and from whence he diſtinctly heard the hooting of owls, he endeavoured to perſuade his maſter to remain where he was, rather than run ſo great a hazard.

At length the Baronet recollected there were windows; and in hopes of finding one that looked into the court, where he was certain of being able to alarm ſome of the ſervants, he approached one, and opening with ſome difficulty the caſement, perceived with additional diſappointment that the windows looked towards the beach; the brightneſs of the moon, and the hollow murmuring of the ſea, which daſhed at intervals upon the pebbly ſhore, appearing to make his ſituation ſtill more deſolate.

"Not

"Not for twenty thouſand a-year," ſaid he, "would I have ſlept in this dreary place, if there had been a poſſibility of avoiding it!"

La Jeuneſſe rejoiced in the welcome intelligence; and after endeavouring to conſole his unfortunate maſter, and having placed ſeveral lamps with which he was provided according to his maſter's cuſtom, he prepared to take poſſeſſion of his own apartment, which, leſs magnificently furniſhed, was hardly in ſo good repair; and the terrified valet heard on all ſides the ſcampering of rats in the flooring, the ſcreaming of owls, and chirping of crickets in the chimney.

CHAP. III.

Report of faſhions in proud Italy,
Whoſe manners ſtill our tardy apiſh nation
Limps after, in baſe awkward imitation.
Where doth the world thruſt forth a vanity
(So it be new, there's no reſpect how vile)
That is not quickly buzz'd into his ears?

RICHARD II.

SIR Francis L'Eſterling's ſole aim was ſingularity; which in ſome meaſure he contrived to procure himſelf by conſtantly making it a rule to maintain ſome very extraordinary opinion which he ſupported with great force of argument and ſtrength of reaſoning upon all occaſions and in all companies. Sometimes he would put on all the air and accent of a foreigner, and interlard his ſtrange diſcourſe with French ſentences and ſcraps of Italian; and at others aſſuming all the gravity

gravity of a Turk, he would declare there was no exiſting without opium, which he pretended to chew in large quantities. He was *nervous*; he believed in ghoſts; he was decidedly a diſciple of Meſmer or of Mainauduc; in ſhort, he was paſſionately fond of foreigners: and whatſoever abſurdities they broached, either in their writings or in their converſations, of which he was extravagantly fond, they were ſure of a warm advocate in Sir Francis L'Eſterling; who, if his rhetoric was not the moſt convincing, did not fail to exert it vigorouſly upon ſuch occaſions, at the ſame time placing the moſt implicit confidence in the ſtrength of it. Sir Francis was fond of muſic, hated perfumes, could draw patterns, collected foſſils, affected ſtudy, but was particularly fond of dancing. In ſhort, he laboured to become an epitome of incongruity and whims; he would ſometimes be pleaſant and amuſing, in order to contraſt more ſtrongly his diſagreeable fits, which were upon the whole the moſt frequent.

Yet notwithſtanding, there was, in his opinion, ſomething ſo attractive and elegant in the perſon and manners of Lord Caerleon, the brother of Lady Mariamne Conway, to whom he had been ſome time paying his addreſſes, that, in ſpite of his extreme wiſh to be reckoned a very peculiar, odd ſort of man, he ſometimes caught himſelf in the very act of ſtudiouſly copying his dreſs, his air, his manners, and even the tone of his voice. It was this extreme deference for Lord Caerleon, that firſt induced Sir Francis L'Eſterling to pay his addreſſes to Lady Mariamne, who was the *ton*, and with whom he had very little chance of ſucceeding, when the death of his uncle put him in poſſeſſion of ten thouſand a-year.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Que m'importe après tout, que ſon ame hardie
De mon parjure amant flatte la perfidie;
Ou qu'exerçant ſur lui ſon dédaigneux pouvoir,
Elle fait mes tourmens ſans même le vouloir?
Qu'elle chériſſe ou non le bien qu'elle m'enleve?
Je le perds, il ſuffit: ſa fierté s'en éleve;
Ma honte fait ſa gloire; elle a dans mes douleurs
Le plaiſir inſultant de jouir de mes pleurs.

VOLTAIRE.

MR. Harwood's repeated enquiries in the neighbourhood had at length been ſucceſsful, but moſt unſatisfactory.

Mr. Carloville, he was told, was the eldeſt ſon of Baron Carloville. But, from a ſeries of bad habits, and particularly having loſt great ſums at play, to reſtrain him from which his father's remonſtrances had no effect, Lord Carloville had determined to act ſo as effectually to puniſh and mortify his ſon, by peremptorily refuſing to ſee him or remit him money. This moſt diſtreſſing information Mr. Harwood had carefully concealed from his wife, whilſt he revolved in his mind what could be done for the unfortunate Ethelreda.

Carloville's regiment was ordered to the Weſt Indies; a circumſtance carefully concealed by him, but which was well known to Harwood; who, having fixed his departure, was ſolicitous to know how the Carlovilles intended diſpoſing of themſelves; but no intimation had eſcaped either of them, that could relieve the uneaſineſs he

he felt at the future proſpects his affection preſaged for the lovely Ethelreda.

On the day of her marriage, Ethelreda had been preſented by her father with half her mother's jewels and five hundred pounds. The ſame ſum, with the other half of the jewels, according to the requeſt of her dying mother, had been given to Mrs. Harwood. Ethelreda, generous and diſintereſted, immediately gave the money to her huſband: who aſked for the jewels alſo: theſe ſhe ſteadily refuſed to part with; and after ſome altercation on his part, he ſullenly left her to ruminate upon his conduct.

But Carloville's ſelfiſh requeſt dwelt not long on the young mind of Ethelreda, nor did his anxiety to procure the jewels make any impreſſion to his diſadvantage. With a noble eſtate, ſhe knew her father was often at a loſs for his rents: ſhe therefore heartily forgave Carloville for being in want of money, becauſe ſhe thought it ſometimes happened to all; and had they not been her mother's, whoſe memory ſhe revered, the diamonds had been given without a queſtion.

Heavily and ſlowly paſſed two more days at the Caſtle: on the third, the one appointed for the funeral, Sir Francis again returned to be preſent at it; for he had taken up his reſidence at an inn in the mean time, reſolutely determined never to paſs another night in the ſeat of his anceſtors.

Previous to his departure, a will had been ſearched for in every part of the Caſtle where there was the ſmalleſt probability of finding one, but ineffectually. All hopes, therefore, of the very great fortunes expected by the Miſs L'Eſterlings at their father's death, were now at an end; it appeared that Sir Roger's expenſive mode of living had ſometimes more than exhauſted his annual

annual income; and the vaſt ſums he had expended in keeping the roofs and walls of his dwelling in conſtant repair, had broken in imperceptibly on the fortunes of his daughters. Mr. Harwood, who had married from affection, yet felt ſome diſappointment at the diſcovery, which however he carefully concealed from her, who on his account felt double mortification.

Carloville too, who had taken no pains to hide from his wife his anger at the firmneſs with which ſhe refuſed the jewels, was not leſs ſolicitous than his brother-in-law, to conceal from all the exceſs of rage and bitterneſs he inwardly felt at having married an heireſs who was portionleſs.

The interment having taken place with great pomp by torch-light; and Mr. Harwood having previouſly taken leave of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, who, ſtill preſerving his antipathy to lodging in the Caſtle, notwithſtanding the darkneſs of the night, was departed; Mrs. Carloville, overcome with grief for the premature death of her father, whoſe memory, not reſenting his extravagance, ſhe tenderly loved, had retired to bed; where the heavineſs of her ſorrow ſoon threw her into a profound ſleep.

But Carloville, who heſitated at nothing, had previouſly taken an unfeeling and cruel reſolution, which he ſtudiouſly concealed from his wife and her relations.

Addicted to every ſpecies of diſſipation, Mr. Carloville had long been abandoned by his family, in order, if poſſible, by retrenching his income to reform his unbounded extravagance and unprincipled libertiniſm. This mode of proceeding on the part of Lord Carloville, had been the means of breaking off a match between Lady Mariamne Conway and his ſon; Lord Trecaſtle having taken the moſt effectual method of putting

putting an end to the connection, by aſſuring Mr. Carloville he would never give him his daughter or her fortune, whilſt under the diſpleaſure of his family. Lady Mariamne did not acquieſce very peaceably in this arrangement, and would immediately have married Mr. Carloville privately. This however he artfully evaded; a wife without a fortune was by no means adopted to his circumſtances or inclination. He therefore departed on a ſhooting-party into Wales with Lord Caerleon, aſſuring Lady Mariamne of his unalterable attachment and inviolable conſtancy; when the ſight of Ethelreda, and the hoſpitality that reigned in the Caſtle, induced him to attack the Baronet on his weak ſide, which he eaſily diſcovered, and finally to marry Ethelreda L'Eſterling.

The ſame motives that incited him to marry, provoked him to abandon his wife, whoſe charming temper, cultivated underſtanding, and faſcinating manners had no power to attach, or reform a diſpoſition habitually ſelfiſh and inured to vice. Yet irreligious, immoral, and profligate as he was, Carloville could conceal theſe deformities of his mind under the diſguiſe of gaiety. His perſon was handſome, his air faſhionable; and when no diſappointment croſſed his temper, and no ſelfiſh motive excited his reſentment, his manners were prepoſſeſſing and agreeable.

It is not therefore very ſurpriſing that to a young woman ſuch as Lady Mariamne theſe were ſufficient recommendations, while his vices, though equally well known, were excuſed or overlooked as ſo common to young men of faſhion; and which, though rather too flagrant to find any partiſans even amongſt the moſt diſſipated, were entirely pardoned by her, whoſe blind partiality, ſubduing her natural haughtineſs, made her

her receive the news of his marriage with all the violence of rage and grief. Unuſed to contradiction, ſhe felt with bitterneſs the diſappointment ariſing from what ſhe termed her father's cruelty; but confiding in Carloville's vows of eternal fidelity, ſhe looked forward with confidence to reconciling Lord Trecaſtle to the match; whoſe extreme indulgence had ſeldom held out againſt tears and entreaties. When therefore Lady Mariamne found all her expectations and hopes fruſtrated by Carloville's deſertion, and union with Ethelreda L'Eſterling, ſhe determined to accept Sir Francis, now the richeſt of her lovers; enjoying with a malignant ſatisfaction Carloville's diſappointment in the fortune of his wife; and inwardly conſoling herſelf with the idea of Ethelreda's misfortunes, whom ſhe deteſted for having ſuperſeded her in Carloville's affections, whilſt ſhe ardently waited for an opportunity of avenging the affront upon him with all the aſperity and bitterneſs of irony, of which ſhe knew herſelf ſo capable.

CHAP. V.

La fraude adroite et ſubtile
Seme de fleurs ſon chemin,
Mais ſur ſes pas vient enfin
Le repentir inutile.

ESTHER DE RACINE.

THE inhabitants of the Caſtle were retired to reſt, and within the walls the profound ſtilneſs was broken only by the loud chirping cricket and diſmal hooting of the ſolitary owl. The whiſtling of

of the wind amongſt the turrets, and the ſlow and ſullen murmurs of the ebbing tide, alone diſturbed the ſilence of a diſmal night.

Spent with watching (for, from their affection, they had all determined not to leave the corpſe till after the interment, which had juſt taken place), the ſervants had ſtretched themſelves upon the kitchen hearth, where the dying glow of ſome wood embers, "taught light to counterfeit a gloom." The weary and ſuperſtitious porter, deſerting his tower over the gateway, had left the key in the maſſy gate, which was ſtanding open: no longer ſubject to the vigilant eye of Sir Roger, he had joined the drowſy group in the great kitchen.

Through theſe Carloville nimbly paſſed, without riſque of diſturbing them, to the court; the gate, the only impediment he feared, which however he had provided himſelf with the means to overcome, was to his great relief unfaſtened. Of the draw-bridge he was perfectly ſecure, as the cuſtom of raiſing it at night had been diſcontinued on account of the decayed ſtate of ſome of its machinery.

The moon, dimly breaking through black ſtormy clouds, diſcovered to him, beyond the farther court, a chaiſe and his own ſervant waiting his arrival; he quickly jumped into it, followed by his valet, and was ſpeedily out of the neighbourhood of St. Siffrid's.

The morning, cold and foggy, had not tempted Mrs. Carloville to riſe before eight o'clock. Harwood and his wife had already diſcovered the departure of Carloville, and, firmly perſuaded that Ethelreda accompanied him, they were recalling to their recollection every poſſible circumſtance that could have occaſioned a flight ſo precipitate and ſo ſecret; when Ethelreda walked

ſlowly into the breakfaſt-room, enquiring, as ſhe entered, for Mr. Carloville. The whole truth ruſhed inſtantly upon the mind of Harwood; Sibilla too, unable to ſpeak to her deſerted ſiſter, burſt into tears.

"Sibilla! Mr. Harwood! I entreat you to tell what has happened!" cried the trembling Ethelreda, ſinking with apprehenſion. "Nothing, nothing!" cried Harwood, running haſtily out of the room. Ethelreda attempted to follow him; but ſhe was unable to proceed, and, leaning on the table, with difficulty ſupported herſelf from fainting. "Your unworthy huſband, Ethelreda," ſaid Harwood, haſtily entering with rage in his countenance, "has deſerted and abandoned you! Deceitful, hypocritical villain, I will purſue him to———" Ethelreda dropped upon the floor.

Harwood's rage was converted into terror: her ſiſter ſprung forward to prevent her fall. At length, opening her eyes. and burſting into tears, "Oh my father!" ſhe cried, "you have left me for ever, and I have not a protection upon earth!"

"Unkind Ethelreda! You then forget you have a ſiſter?" ſaid the weeping Sibilla. Harwood too, in the moſt affectionate terms, entreated the forſaken Ethelreda to make his houſe her aſylum, and forget the wretch who had baſely and deliberately abandoned her when ſhe moſt required his protection.

Without waiting for an anſwer, Harwood ſupported her in his arms through the apartments of the Caſtle, and, placing her and his wife in a chaiſe, ſtepped in after them. Surrounded by the ſervants, who came to take leave of the daughters of their beloved maſter, the chaiſe could not proceed. The two ſiſters affectionately

ſpoke

ſpoke to each. Ethelreda would have wiſhed them happineſs, but the words died upon her lips; then looking eagerly round the court as the chaiſe drove on, ſhe burſt into freſh tears, and, leaning her head upon her hands, indulged herſelf in all the bitterneſs of unavailing ſorrow.

Three months ſpent in retirement at Kilgaren had a little abated the melancholy that preyed on the mind of Ethelreda; and her natural vivacity was gradually returning in ſpite of the unwelcome reflections that continually recurred to her. Yet there was ſomething in dependence ſo grating to the ſpirit of a L'Eſterling, that not all the tenderneſs of her ſiſter, nor the affectionate attentions of Harwood, could baniſh the humiliating idea. That ſhe was an additional incumbrance to his circumſcribed fortune, added bitterneſs to her grief: and ſeeking the moſt ſolitary ſpots on the banks of the river, ſhe would indulge herſelf in romantic projects which were to raiſe her into affluence and independence; or, giving way to all the gloomineſs of deſpondence, ſhe would ſpend whole days in unavailing tears, and in forming the wildeſt and moſt impracticable ſchemes to leave the Harwoods, and find out her huſband, whoſe retreat ſhe had not yet attempted to diſcover. Yet his memory was become painful to her; and when ſhe conſidered that to live with him would be the moſt inſupportable puniſhment, to live with the Harwoods appeared peace and happineſs, ſplendour and independence.

In this painful and uneaſy ſtate was the wavering mind of Ethelreda: one moment haraſſed by the pride of her family ſpirit, which urged her to quit them; the next, congratulating herſelf on the tranquillity ſhe enjoyed, ſhe would determine never to leave them; when Mr. Harwood received a ſummons to take poſſeſſion of his un-

cle's fortune, who died leaving him heir to three thouſand a-year and a large ſum of money.

The joy that reigned at Kilgaren at this unexpected and almoſt unwiſhed-for acquiſition had communicated itſelf to the heart of Ethelreda. Harwood was departed for Weſtmoreland, to make the neceſſary arrangements for the reception of his family at the ſeat of his anceſtors. His departure however gave her a ſenſible uneaſineſs: ſhe knew his intention of quitting Wales; and the idea of removing from her native mountains was almoſt as diſtreſſing as had been that of leaving the ſtill fondly remembered St. Siffrid's.

Mr. Harwood's was a ſhort abſence: he returned at the end of a fortnight, and eagerly enquiring for the health of his children,—"I have ſomething to propoſe, my dear Sibilla," ſaid he, "that I am certain both you and Ethelreda will approve. In London I accidentally met Sir Francis L'Eſterling, and could not avoid aſking ſome queſtions about the Caſtle; he intends to let it, and I have half agreed to take it: for I find upon viſiting Harwood-hall, that my uncle lived in one room of it, and has ſuffered all the reſt to want repairs ſo much, that it will take a long time to render it habitable. Sir Francis is on the point of marrying," continued Harwood; "and, what is ſtill more extraordinary, he purpoſes to viſit Wales next ſummer, accompanied by his lady."

Mrs. Harwood acquieſced, with pleaſure in her eyes. Ethelreda, agitated by a thouſand tumultuous emotions, ſilently retired to her own room, whilſt Harwood iſſued orders towards a ſpeedy departure.

Ethelreda in returning to the Caſtle fancied ſhe ſhould feel her misfortunes with ſtill more poignancy.

poignancy. But ſhe was miſtaken. Young, and with naturally good ſpirits, ſhe had conſiderably conquered her melancholy. Her vivacity, and that taſte for amuſement and occupation by turns, the conſtant attendants on vigorous intellects, imperceptibly returned. At Kilgaren, the keenneſs of her feelings, and that reſtleſs indolence that always accompanies extreme ſorrow, had deſtroyed the ardent deſire of improvement and the thirſt after information, once the marked outlines of Ethelreda's character. Company was irkſome, yet ſolitude was as ſevere a burden; wandering all day on the tops of the hills, or on the banks of the river, ſhe would return weary and diſpirited: again the morning broke, ſhe roſe unrefreſhed by ſleep, and tormented with the recollection of a thouſand uneaſy dreams. Occupation would alone have contributed to her relief; but of this ſhe could not perſuade herſelf: her ſpirits were ſunk and depreſſed by the moſt corroding reflections; and proſpects that brightened not, as ſhe looked forward, continually preſented themſelves to her deſponding and terrified imagination.

But at St. Siffrid's, a thouſand objects directed her thoughts from herſelf. Some poor penſioners whom her misfortunes had obliged her to abandon, firſt preſented themſelves to recollection. Though Mr. Harwood had in the moſt preſſing manner entreated her to accept a very handſome ſum, which would at once have given her the independence ſhe ſo lately ſighed for, Ethelreda firmly refuſed it; leſt by ſome fatality the knowledge of it ſhould tempt the ſelfiſh and intereſted Carloville to return and claim her as his wife. She therefore received from Harwood an annual ſum, which, infinitely more than ade-

quate

quate to her perſonal wants, ſhe chiefly diſtributed amongſt the poor of the neighbourhood.

In this benevolent exercife, the tender and charitable heart of Ethelreda found its chief conſolation; and, her thoughts diverted from dwelling perpetually on her own ſorrows, ſhe again ſought occupation. This was moſtly afforded her from the Caſtle library, which, though valuable, contained but few modern books. Sometimes her harp relieved and at the ſame time indulged the penſiveneſs of her ſpirits; and ſometimes, in all the glowing truth of colouring, ſhe would copy with her pencil the picturefque ſcenes that ſurrounded the Caſtle. In theſe employments paſſed not unpleaſantly the firſt two months of Ethelreda's reſidence there.

It was early in the ſpring; the few viſitors that were ſeen at the Caſtle ſhe no longer carefully ſhunned, but looked forward to the arrival of more neighbours with cheerfulneſs and ſatisfaction. Sibilla ſaw with infinite delight this almoſt unexpected change, and, encouraging her ſiſter's returning reliſh for company, neglected no opportunities of improving it.

Notwithſtanding his ſilence on the ſubject, Mr. Harwood by private enquiries had gained ſome information concerning Carloville. That he had diſpoſed of his commiſſion and had left England, was however all that his utmoſt diligence could procure him. And as he ſaw from day to day, the remembrance of his cruelty had ceaſed to torment the mind of Ethelreda, he firmly reſolved never to mention his name, at the ſame time wiſhing moſt fervently he had never exiſted.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

I do not think a braver gentleman,
More active, valiant, or more valued young,
More daring, or more bold, is now alive,
To grace this latter age with noble deeds.

HENRY IV.

"I HAVE been arranging a charming party for you this morning," ſaid Harwood, throwing down his hat upon a tambour, and overſetting Ethelreda's eaſel with his foot, as he entered the breakfaſt-room.

"Dear Charles!" cried Mrs. Harwood, "You have deranged a very uſeful one;" looking at the proſtrate eaſel: "You muſt have ſomething to propoſe vaſtly agreeable, to make up for all this?"

"Well, well, forgive my awkwardneſs, and let me tell you my plan: I have made an acquaintance in a cave, which I find is called St. Siffrid's," continued he; "we were both ſo charmed with the romantic beauty of the ſcene, that we agreed to meet there and dine. To-morrow the tide will ſerve exactly."

"But I do not yet comprehend how this arrangement is to extend to us?" ſaid Ethelreda daily. "This is apparently a tête à-tête party, which I think you had better have kept a ſecret, as you have done the name of your new friend."

"It is Mr. Conway!" cried Harwood laughing at the impatience which had made him forget it; "he propoſed bringing his mother and his couſins

couſins, and I have promiſed for your appearance, Ethelreda, and Sibilla's."

"I like your plan prodigiouſly, and I forgive the miſchief you have done in telling it," ſaid Ethelreda, picking up the damaged eaſel. "I expect," continued ſhe, "to find a freſh ſubject for my pencil; and Sibilla, I ſuppoſe, expects to paſs a very pleaſant ſea-ſick day—You know ſhe dotes on marine expeditions!"

"Make yourſelf perfectly eaſy, my dear ſiſter," ſaid Mrs. Harwood. "I would not ſtep into a boat on this wild and terrible coaſt for the univerſe!"

"And make *your*ſelf perfectly eaſy, my dear Sibilla!" ſaid Mr. Harwood; "for I engage you ſhall walk to St. Siffrid's cave without wetting your ſhoes.—But I have broken in upon your employment, ſo come and walk with me by way of puniſhment." Then giving an arm to each, they ſet out to pay and return viſits in the neighbourhood, but particularly to introduce themſelves to the family at Strathener Caſtle, which had been ſome days arrived there to ſpend the ſummer.

The inconſiderable diſtance between Strathener and St. Siffrid's, made Mrs. Harwood and her ſiſter prefer the exerciſe of walking to that of a carriage; and their proximity makes it neceſſary to explain why the ceremony of introduction was yet to take place, ſince both families had been a ſufficient number of centuries eſtabliſhed in their reſpective habitations, to render them perfectly eligible acquaintance for each other. Lord Trecaſtle and his ſon had from time to time viſited the Caſtle in the ſhooting ſeaſon; of courſe they had been frequent viſitors at St. Siffrid's: but the late Lady Trecaſtle having ſtipulated at her marriage that ſhe ſhould never reſide

reſide in Wales but with her own conſent, quitted this world without ever having ſeen the moſt beautiful ſpot in it. Her daughters, having imbibed the ſame prejudices, reluctantly accompanied their aunt Mrs. Conway, who with her ſon and huſband had lately returned from one of the Italian Courts, where Mr. Conway had reſided many years as Envoy, and from whence he had been recalled, with expectations of ſome more important employ.

Henry Conway, though educated chiefly abroad, was yet a determined Engliſhman. His father, who ſaw perfection in no other character than that of a conſummate politician, or an able negotiator, would willingly have directed his ſon's inclinations the ſame way: but Henry Conway had no turn for intrigue; with manners the moſt prepoſſeſſing, and a perſon that would have afforded no inconſiderable aid, joined to that greateſt of advantages, a finiſhed education, Henry Conway had choſen the ſea for his profeſſion. He was now therefore, in the two-and-twentieth year of his age, the firſt lieutenant of a frigate. Mr. Conway, though diſappointed at not ſeeing his ſon diſplaying all his brilliant talents and qualifications in the diplomatic line, in which he conceived him capable of making ſo great a figure, ſtill placed a very high value upon his ſon's ſervices, and neglected no means of raiſing him in his profeſſion by his intereſt, or of aggrandizing his own name and fortune.

Henry Conway was adored by his mother, who unremittingly tried to remedy the defects of his education: for it had many; ſince the ſyſtem purſued by Mr. Conway, though ſhining, was far from perfect, and abſolutely deficient in ſome points that Mrs. Conway reckoned amongſt the moſt eſſential. But ſhe had few opportunities

of inculcating her leſſons; yet, ſuch as they were, ſhe had the ſatisfaction of obſerving they were repaid with the ſtrongeſt affection and gratitude, and for the time at leaſt appeared to make ſome impreſſion.

"I believe I did not tell you this morning," ſaid Harwood, as they walked through the ſhrubbery, and were approaching the hall, "that lady Mariamne Conway is married to Sir Francis L'Eſterling!"

The ladies were about to expreſs their ſurpriſe, and to rally him on his extreme careleſsneſs, when they ſaw approaching quick to meet them, a young and very handſome man, who had juſt diſmounted from his horſe.

"It is Mr. Conway," ſaid Harwood, precipitately advancing to meet him, and as precipitately introducing Mrs. Carloville and Mrs. Harwood. The ſtranger, politely and cordially ſhaking him by the hand, expreſſed much pleaſure at meeting him accompanied by the ladies of his family. "I flatter myſelf," continued Conway, "you are going towards the Caſtle: my couſins and my mother are ſtill at home, and will be delighted to ſee their new relations, whoſe intimate acquaintance they anxiouſly covet."—Conway, ſtepping forward, threw open the door of a library, where ſat an elegant and graceful-looking woman about forty, and two very faſhionable and very affected-looking younger ones.

After the ceremony of introduction was over, and the party to the cave had been ſufficiently applauded and objected to, and diſcuſſed and ſettled; and invitations to Strathener and St. Siffrid's had been mutually exchanged, Mrs. Harwood and her ſiſter roſe to depart. Conway, ſnatching up his hat, entreated permiſſion to accompany

company them, to the no ſmall diſſatisfaction of his couſin Lady Octavia, who by no means reliſhed the very great pleaſure with which he ſeemed to congratulate himſelf on his new acquaintance.

"I cannot ſay I am *wonderfully* ſtruck either with the manners or appearance of Sir Francis's couſins," ſaid Lady Mariamne addreſſing her ſiſter, "as Harry Conway appears to be!"—

"Dear! Lady Mariamne, I cannot imagine to what you can object, in either; in my opinion Mrs. Carloville is one of the moſt *intereſting* creatures I ever beheld, and Mrs. Harwood is very charming;" ſaid Lady Octavia, who had previouſly ſtudied the countenance of her aunt.

"I agree with you, Lady Octavia," ſaid Mrs. Conway. "Mrs. Carloville appears to be perfectly well bred and well educated, and her perſon is abſolutely faultleſs. But Lady Mariamne is extremely faſtidious," continued Mrs. Conway in a good-humoured but rather ſarcaſtic tone—"You know, Octavia, ſhe ſometimes finds fault with Conway himſelf."

The well-known partiality of Lady Octavia, and her large fortune, had already determined the Honourable Mr. Conway, her uncle, to promote with all his authority a match between her and his only ſon. He therefore eagerly accepted his brother Lord Trecaſtle's invitation to ſpend the ſummer at Strathener Caſtle with his family. Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling propoſed being of the party; and Sir Francis, Lord Trecaſtle, Lord Caerleon and Mr. Conway, whom indiſpenſible buſineſs detained in London, having promiſed ſpeedily to join them at the Caſtle, the ladies departed, eſcorted by Henry Conway.

Mrs.

Mrs. Conway had carefully ſtudied the diſpoſition of her intended daughter, and ſaw but faint proſpects of happineſs for her ſon in ſuch a connexion: ſhe ſaw too that Conway entered not with alacrity into his father's views, and that the undiſguiſed partiality of Octavia diſtreſſed and diſconcerted him. That ſhe was ſelfiſh, vain, ignorant, and even envious, the penetrating and ſagacious Mrs. Conway had long obſerved. But too firmly perſuaded that, after her huſband's reſolution was finally taken, there was no appeal, ſhe carefully concealed from her ſon the numberleſs faults ſhe continued to diſcover in the character of Octavia; beſtowing indefatigable pains, and endeavouring with extreme anxiety, to correct and amend them.

Conway, not leſs clear-ſighted and penetrating, had already made equal progreſs in diſcovering the imperfections of his couſin. That ſhe was handſome he could not deny: but beauty warped by affectation and vanity was, in the eyes of Conway, not an object of delight, but of diſguſt; her attentions were not flattering, and her unreturned preference was become irkſome to him. But Lady Octavia, into whoſe catalogue of female virtues reſerve did not enter, reſolutely ſhut her eyes from the conviction that ſtared her in the face, of Conway's indifference, or rather his diſlike.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

——— The ſouthern wind
Doth play the trumpet to his purpoſes,
And by his hollow whiſtling in the leaves
Foretells a tempeſt and a bluſt'ring day.
SHAKESPEARE.

HARWOOD, having taken upon himſelf to provide every thing for the reception of the ladies at the cave, was not to be diſcouraged by a lowering morning: they ſet out in carriages for the cave, which was not quite two miles from St. Siffrid's Caſtle.

This extraordinary and romantic ſpot, except at low water, was perfectly inacceſſible; the rock running out on each ſide into the ſea, ſo as to preclude the approach by land; and the extreme danger of the coaſt as effectually forbade the aſſiſtance of boats. In rough weather, the waves ruſhing with violence into the cavern threw the ſpray to the ſummit, wetting a few ragged and leafleſs thorns, which, growing from the clefts in the rock and bending themſelves towards the mouth of the cave, intermixed with the long gloſſy leaves of the polipodies and the ſamphire, conſiderably added to its wild picturesque beauty.

Here Mrs. Harwood and her party were ſoon joined by the company from Strathener, very unexpectedly reinforced by Lord Trecaſtle, Lord Caerleon, Mr. Conway, and Sir Francis L'Eſterling.

The

The company now ſeated themſelves at the table: all beſtowed praiſes on the beauty of the ſcene and the taſte of the entertainer; whilſt ſome harpers, placed amongſt the hollows of the cavern, at intervals interrupted the converſation.

Lord Caerleon repeatedly declared how much he enjoyed a dinner *al freſco*; Sir Francis proteſted it was more charming than Venice itſelf. Lady Mariamne, laying aſide her uſual forbidding haughtineſs, was all condeſcenſion; and Lady Octavia, redoubling her ſentimental airs, was more troubleſome than ever to Conway, who alone ſeemed to feel any thing like depreſſion or lowneſs of ſpirits, amidſt this ſcene of hilarity.

Harwood's ſpirits, conſiderably exhilarated by doing the honours of his table and obſerving the ſatisfaction of his gueſts, now ſuddenly recollecting how much Ethelreda could add to the entertainment, loudly called to her to ſing, in which he was ſtrenuouſly ſupported by all the gentlemen. Lord Caerleon poſitively inſiſted it ſhould be Italian; Sir Francis, who, cloſely copying his model, had been paying the moſt florid compliments to the diverted Ethelreda, re-echoed, "Italian!" when ſhe began the rondo of "Idol mio ſerena i rai." She had half finiſhed this enchanting air in a ſtyle the moſt captivating and maſterly, when a loud whiſper of "She is intolerably out of time," from Lady Mariamne to her ſiſter, ſo diſconcerted her that ſhe ſtopped inſtantly, utterly incapable of continuing. She bluſhed, and apologiſed by looking at the two ladies.

The gentlemen all entreated her to finiſh her ſong, except Harwood, who, provoked at Lady Mariamne's envy and want of manners, ſaid, "No,

"No, no! excuſe Mrs. Carloville: Lady Mariamne will do us the favour to ſing."

"Lady Mariamne knows very little of muſic, I believe," ſaid Lord Caerleon careleſsly.

"For heaven's ſake! ſay nothing on that ſubject, dear Harwood!" cried the almoſt tipſy Sir Francis; "Io per me aſcoltarei ſempre piu pazientimente parlare un bergamoſco!" forgetting that his aſtoniſhed and exaſperated lady ſat at his elbow.

"Really, ſir!" cried ſhe almoſt burſting with rage, "I never had the pleaſure of hearing you expreſs yourſelf in this way before."

"Oh, Jupiter!" cried Sir Francis, with a laugh he could not contain, and in which he was joined by all the men; "your Ladyſhip underſtands Italian?"

The ſarcaſtic tone and the laugh that accompanied his reply, did not diminiſh her ladyſhip's rage. On the contrary, the diſpute was growing warm, but for the interference of Lord Trecaſtle, who obſerved the tide was coming in, and the ſky black with heavy clouds from the ſouth. But Harwood vehemently objected againſt the breaking up of the party, declaring poſitively the tide could not incommode them for another hour. The men, who were all rather incapacitated from forming any judgment of the truth of this aſſurance, very contentedly acquieſced, and would quietly have reſeated themſelves at the table, when a loud clap of thunder, followed by a violent ſhower of rain, obliged the whole party to retreat further into the receſſes of the cave. Here the ladies paſſed near a quarter of an hour in the moſt alarming expectation of another clap of thunder, and impatiently waiting for the rain to abate, which however continued falling in torrents. The increaſed

creaſed roaring of the ſea added to their apprehenſions, and began to give them a ſerious alarm that they ſhould find ſome inconvenience in making good their retreat. The countenance of Ethelreda had given evident ſigns of terror; and Conway, who ſtood next her, perceived the agony ſhe endured, as the broad flaſhes of lightning ſhone upon her pale face.

"I can ſtay here no longer!" ſhe cried in a voice of deſpair, and, attempting to move forward, would have fallen on the ground, had not Conway, who followed, caught her in his arms.

"Let me ſupport you," ſaid he, putting his arm round her. She was unable to reply: they came to the mouth of the cave: the dim twilight ſcarcely ſhowed them all the horrors of their ſituation, the ſea raging furiouſly, and daſhing its ſpray with violence over the fartheſt rock.

"In a few moments," cried the agonized Ethelreda, "and we muſt remain here for ever!" She would have returned to the party in the cave, but her feet were fixed to the earth. "Sibilla!" ſhe faintly articulated, and ſunk lifeleſs upon Conway's ſhoulder.

"I will ſave her!" cried he paſſionately, lifting her in his arms, and running towards the beach; "I will ſave her, or we will periſh together!"—He reſolutely ruſhed into the water, which was ſtill ſhallow, owing to the flatneſs of the beach, and, approaching the farther rock, made repeated efforts to paſs it, when the waves retreated; which, returning almoſt inſtantaneouſly with redoubled force, would inevitably have overwhelmed him and his lovely burden, when he ſaw rolling towards the rock a wave of tremendous ſize. The violence with which it came forward would have deſtroyed them both, had not Conway avoided its fury by ſheltering himſelf behind

behind a ſmall projection in the rock. Then following with all his remaining ſtrength the wave, which retreated proportionally to the rapidity with which it had advanced, with inexpreſſible joy he ſaw himſelf on the other ſide; and, wading through the ſhallow water, was ſoon out of danger from the advancing tide.

At ſome diſtance, and out of the reach of the ſea, he placed Ethelreda on the graſs. She ſtill continued inſenſible.—"She is dead!" cried he in an agony of deſpair. His mother ruſhed into his mind: he ran towards the ſea: "I will return, and aſſiſt them to eſcape!"

It was impoſſible! The tide was almoſt at its height; the night was fearfully dark: but the intrepid and deſpairing Conway, impelled by the idea of his mother's ſufferings, and the extreme bitterneſs of his own, once more ruſhed fearleſsly into the water. He was ſoon out of his depth; but being an expert ſwimmer, he endeavoured with all his ſtrength once more to paſs the rock: but the ſea continued to roll in, blown by a ſtrong ſoutherly wind, with extreme violence; and the unfortunate Conway, daſhed back repeatedly by its fury, felt that he ſhould inevitably drown himſelf in the attempt; for to reach the cave was utterly impracticable.

In this moment of extreme danger, that natural love of life, which for an inſtant his ardent deſire to ſave his parents had extinguiſhed, again re-animated the almoſt breathleſs Conway: vigorouſly exerting his nearly exhauſted ſtrength, and aſſiſted by the waves, he once more reached the ſhore, ſo ſpent with toil, and ſo diſabled by bruiſes, that, unable to arrive at the ſpot where he had left Ethelreda, he threw himſelf on the graſs, expecting to periſh there, numbed with the

the coldneſs of his wet clothes and the violence of his bruiſes.

It was not till Ethelreda and Conway had eſcaped, that the remainder of the party perceived the extreme danger of their ſituation. Lady Mariamne and Lady Octavia had repeatedly declared they would not leave the cave till the rain was over; and whilſt the gentlemen were arguing the matter with ſome violence, the ſea approached ſo rapidly, that the foam of a tremendous wave wetted their feet as they ſtood in the farther part of the cavern.

A univerſal ſhriek of horror re-echoed through its hollows; all was confuſion and terror; hyſterics, faintings, and convulſions, contributed to the extreme miſery of their hopeleſs ſituation. The men, whom danger had completely ſobered, raved and were ſilent by turns; Harwood claſping the dying Sibilla in his arms, in ſpeechleſs agony awaited their diſſolution; when a ſtrong light was ſeen glimmering through the inner receſſes of the cave, and loud voices, almoſt drowned by the ſtill louder roaring of the ſea, were heard indiſtinctly through its chaſms. Inſtantaneouſly the diſmayed group approached towards the light with precipitation. With joy almoſt two powerful for their ſenſes, they ſaw a ſteep, but acceſſible flight of natural ſteps, beyond which, not a boiſterous and tempeſtuous ſea, but the trunks of ſome tall trees preſented themſelves, faintly illuminated by the dimly riſing moon. Here the carriages awaited them; having reached which, they now firſt perceived the abſence of Ethelreda and Conway. Mrs. Conway wildly inſiſted upon returning to the cave; but Harwood, forcibly placing her in his coach with her nieces, ordered his ſervants to drive to St. Siffrid's.

Attended

Attended by ſervants with flambeaux, Harwood deſcended the craggy paſſage, concluding that Ethelreda, unable to follow quickly thoſe who carried the lights, was bewildered in its turnings. To find Conway with her he naturally expected. But ſtill continuing to deſcend without meeting the objects of his ſearch, the terrified Harwood called aloud to Ethelreda. The name alone repeated through the cavern, chilled his whole ſoul; at length approaching nearer, he perceived it was quite full of water; and the waves, beating furiouſly againſt its roof, ſeemed as if they would force themſelves through the narrow aperture by which he had deſcended. That they had remained in the cave till the waves overwhelmed them, whilſt all beſides eſcaped, ſeemed ſo impoſſible, that Harwood reaſcended immediately; firmly expecting to meet them waiting his return, and that ſome ſtrange chance had ſeparated them from the reſt of the company. And he was not miſtaken; at a little diſtance, as he emerged from the cavern, ſlowly approached Ethelreda ſupporting Conway, pale, ſhivering, and ſtreaming with wet; his forlorn figure ſtrongly repreſenting the ghoſt of the ſhipwrecked Ceyx, whilſt the countenance of Ethelreda gave no imperfect idea of the deſpairing and terrified Halcyone.

Harwood judiciouſly forbore aſking them any queſtions; and lifting Ethelreda into a carriage, and then placing Conway by her ſide, whoſe ſtiffened joints and benumbed limbs refuſed to lend him any aſſiſtance, he diſpatched them to the Caſtle, and, once more providing himſelf with a torch, ſet out in ſearch of Mr. Conway, who had departed with ſome ſervants to look for his ſon. The weary and haraſſed Harwood had not however advanced far upon the beach, before he

he diſcovered the unhappy father ſitting ſtupefied with grief upon a ridge of ſtones; where he was reſolutely refuſing to return with his ſervants; but waiting the ebbing of the tide, he prepared, as he ſaid, to pay the laſt offices to his ſon's corpſe, which he expected to find upon the beach.

With ſome difficulty he was made to comprehend his ſon was ſtill alive, and actually on his way to St. Siffrid's: whither at length he was perſuaded to follow with Harwood, who inwardly reſolved never to be inſtrumental in making another party without the walls of his Caſtle as long as he exiſted, firmly believing, that nothing but the hand of Providence itſelf could have ſaved them from the melancholy fate that awaited them. But, in effect, the way had been previouſly diſcovered by the ſervants; who very wiſely concluded their maſters muſt know it becauſe they did. But finding they ſtaid much later than was prudent, and knowing that at high tides the cavern was full of water; they firſt went to the Caſtle to order the carriages, and then prepared to ſee whether any of their owners were alive to make uſe of them.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Inutile ou plutôt funeſte ſympathie!
Trop parfaite union par le ſort démentie!
Ah! par quel ſoin cruel, le Ciel avoit-il joint
Deux cœurs que l'un pour l'autre il ne deſtinoit point?

MITHRIDATE DE RACINE.

AT the preſſing entreaties of Mr. Harwood, the half-drowned party for ſome days took up its reſidence at the Caſtle. The ladies were all confined to their beds with colds: Ethelreda's, accompanied by fever, was the moſt alarming; whilſt Conway, equally incapacitated by bruiſed limbs and ſtrained ſinews, was obliged to recruit by the ſame expedient.

At the end of a week, the leſs diſabled part of Harwood's viſitors departed; leaving Ethelreda, though ſtill confined to her room, ſlowly recovering; and Conway not yet able to walk down ſtairs. Mrs. Conway, being perfectly at eaſe with regard to his ſafety, returned to Strathener with her nieces, promiſing however not to let a day eſcape, in which ſhe did not perſonally enquire after the health of the invalids.

At the end of a fortnight, Ethelreda and her preſerver met. Her heart, full of the moſt lively and tender gratitude, could only expreſs its thankfulneſs by tears: and Conway, paſſionately kiſſing her hand, proteſted he was too happy in having ſaved the life of the loveliеſt woman in the world!

Another week paſſed rapidly at St. Siffrid's; and Conway knew it was abſolutely neceſſary he ſhould

ſhould take his departure. But Harwood oppoſed it with arguments ſo powerful and deciſive, that, notwithſtanding his father's frequent enquiries on the ſubject, and the very plain hints of Lady Octavia, who paid them many viſits, Conway was eaſily ſilenced by his opponent, who would vehemently proteſt the air of St. Siffrid's was ſo infinitely more ſalubrious than that of Strathener, not quite two miles removed from it, that it would be madneſs to return till his health was re-eſtabliſhed. Sometimes Ethelreda would timidly ſupport her brother's argument; and Mrs. Conway, whoſe maternal tenderneſs made her ſee nothing but reaſon and judgment in Harwood's vehemence, would aid them with all her little influence over her huſband.

Another week was drawing towards its cloſe, during which Conway, accompanied by Ethelreda, and ſometimes by Mr. and Mrs. Harwood, took tolerably long walks in the park, the gardens, or on that terrible beach where

"*Mugiendo ſopra 'l marvo le gregge bianco.*"
ARIOSTO.

brought to the ſtill terrified Ethelreda's recollection all the horrors of her late eſcape. And in hearing it circumſtantially related, ſhe found more occaſion for her gratitude, than words to expreſs it.

But notwithſtanding theſe walks in which he took ſo much pleaſure, theſe converſations in which he delighted, Conway felt that a thouſand reaſons required he ſhould quit St. Siffrid's; and having no longer his health to plead, with a dejection the moſt marked upon his countenance, and ſentiments the moſt uneaſy in his heart; having

having expreſſed the high opinion he entertained of Mr. Harwood's kindneſs and hoſpitality, and the great obligations conferred upon him by the attentions of the ladies, he haſtily mounted his horſe, and ſlowly took the road to Strathener.

Ethelreda followed him with her eyes till he diſappeared. Then precipitately returning to her own room, "He is gone to Strathener!" cried ſhe, "and Octavia, ſo unworthy the affection of ſuch a man, will occupy all his time and thoughts, and we ſhall ſee him no more!" Ethelreda could ſcarcely reſtrain her tears at the thought: ſhe was ſorry to be deprived of the ſociety of an amiable perſon; ſhe was grieved that one apparently ſo ill calculated to promote the happineſs and to become the companion of a rational man, ſhould be deſtined to Conway, for whom ſhe felt ſo much friendſhip! who deſerved ſo much better! who apparently underſtood the value of other ſociety than that of the frivolous and inſipid Lady Octavia. She thought of her own ſituation and of Carloville; and no longer able to reſiſt the ſadneſs that overpowered her, ſhe gave way to tears, without knowing whether ſhe wept for herſelf or for Conway. But more awake to her errors, than ready to excuſe them even to herſelf, Ethelreda condemned herſelf for a weakneſs that in the ſtrictneſs of her ideas ſhe thought an outrage to propriety, and incompatible with her engagements and her duty. Whilſt ſhe thought of Carloville with added bitterneſs, and deplored the complicated miſery of her ſituation, ſhe reſolved to forget, or at leaſt not to cheriſh remembrances which muſt add to the repugnance ſhe already felt towards him, and to reconcile herſelf to the painful idea of once more meeting him; an event ſhe by no means thought improbable; though from the moment

ment of his flight ſhe had heard no tidings of him, and had almoſt ceaſed to remember ſuch a man exiſted.

In leaving Ethelreda, Conway ſcarcely endured leſs poignant miſery. That ſhe was married, continually haunted his diſturbed imagination: and no ſtranger to the profligacy of Carloville's character, that ſhe was married to a man ſo unworthy, added tenfold bitterneſs to the almoſt inſupportable misfortune. His own marriage with Lady Octavia, and which he ſaw approaching, no longer filled his heart with uneaſineſs: grown careleſs of happineſs, he had given up all thoughts of remonſtrating with his father. Ethelreda was married! and Conway, to whom all women were indifferent, reſigned himſelf to his deſtiny.

The innumerable obſtacles that ſeparated them, operated not however on the mind of Conway as a cure. He was continually forming pretences to viſit at St. Siffrid's, ſometimes alone, ſometimes accompanied by his mother, whoſe admiration of Ethelreda was ſcarcely leſs fervent than his own.

Theſe viſits Ethelreda returned with delight, ariſing, as ſhe perſuaded herſelf, from her extreme veneration for Mrs. Conway, the charms of her converſation, the affectionate dignity of her manners, and the partiality ſhe continually expreſſed for her young viſitor.

The contraſt between this agreeable woman and her intended daughter, who indeed was ſeldom preſent at theſe morning calls, always filled Ethelreda with diſguſt, and extreme compaſſion for the fate of the accompliſhed and elegant Conway.

Thus deceived by her own heart, which, confiding in its innocence and rectitude, hid from Ethelreda

Ethelreda half the danger of this intimacy ſo deſtructive to her peace, ſhe gradually and imperceptibly confirmed her own unfortunate attachment and that of the not leſs unfortunate Conway; whilſt the thorough conviction of its impropriety mutually haraſſed and diſtracted their minds, depreſſed their ſpirits, and undermined their health.

Three months paſſed heavily away; the autumn approached; and the winter would quickly follow it, that was to ſeparate Ethelreda and Conway, that was to join Lady Octavia and her couſin in the moſt indiſſoluble union—a union, that, notwithſtanding all her boaſted philoſophy, wounded the tender heart of Ethelreda and deſtroyed her repoſe.

The day that was fixed for the departure of the Strathener family rapidly approached, privately haſtened by the influence of Lady Octavia on her uncle; who, diſſatisfied, as well as her Ladyſhip, with the very moderate attentions and want of ardour in Conway towards his bride elect, had with his uſual penetration dived into the motives of his frequent viſits to St. Siffrid's; and much diſpleaſed, though not much ſurpriſed, he inwardly determined to haſten the ceremony, all preliminaries to which had been previouſly adjuſted between him and Lord Trecaſtle.

Lord Trecaſtle was an unpoliſhed, honeſt, good ſort of Welchman; very hoſpitable, very paſſionate, very good-humoured, and dotingly fond of his children, whom he indulged in all the whims and caprices that fancy could dictate or fortune procure. Yet he was ſo inveterately obſtinate, that when once he had determined on any thing, which however he was extremely ſlow and irreſolute in doing, not all the influence of his children, not all the entreaties of his friends, nor even the concurrence of his own

judgment, could make him lay aſide his purpoſe; though, to ſay the truth of this latter quality, the good Earl had but an indifferent ſhare, ſtill more indifferently exerted.

It was Lord Trecaſtle's firſt wiſh that his ſon ſhould ſhine as a politician and a ſtateſman. But the character was infinitely too grave and too laborious for the volatile and frivolous Lord Caerleon, who with fine talents and a good underſtanding, was the moſt agreeable and finiſhed coxcomb that ever exiſted. Without one grain of application or induſtry to purſue the line pointed out to him by his father, and in which Lord Trecaſtle was ſo anxious he ſhould excel, Lord Caerleon had a ſeat in the Houſe, where he ſometimes made long and eloquent ſpeeches, on ſubjects he had never conſidered or even heard of, with all the calm effrontery of a veteran politician who is conſcious that he has acquired a reputation, and may talk nonſenſe with impunity; whilſt the rapidity of his utterance, and his ſingular and judicious choice of phraſes and quotations, always amuſed, and ſometimes dazzled his more experienced auditors. Theſe ebullitions of wit and inconſiſtency were ſure to impoſe on Lord Trecaſtle: and Lord Caerleon had only to ſay he had been ſpeaking in the houſe, to obtain pardon for *any* miſdemeanour, and to inſure unlimited indulgence for all his numerous extravagancies and wild ſchemes, with whatever ſums he choſe to diſpoſe of in their execution.

With ſuch abilities to impoſe on him, Lord Caerleon and his father were the beſt friends in the world: and though Lord Trecaſtle's obſtinacy ſometimes interfered with his ſon's plans; yet, in all their contentions, the latter had manifeſtly ſo much the advantage, by reaſon of his before-mentioned auxiliaries, that Lord Trecaſtle uſually

uſually declined the conteſt, thoroughly convinced of his ſon's ſuperior abilities and brilliant talents.

The Honourable Meredith Conway was in every reſpect the reverſe of his brother. Grave, penetrating, ſhrewd, artful, deſigning; planning with perſpicacity, and executing with vigour; ſtudious, even to mathematical preciſion, in the choice of his expreſſions, yet often at a loſs for the proper word, which gave an air of heſitating caution to his diſcourſe, by no means calculated favourably to prepoſſeſs his auditors; he was well educated and poliſhed, but the ſlave of pride and avarice. Whenever either of theſe paſſions was thwarted, his rage ſubdued his caution; and to an obſerving eye, all his ambitious ſchemes for the aggrandizement of his rank and the accumulation of his fortune were clearly diſcernible. In theſe he believed conſiſted all his own happineſs and that of his ſon; which he reſolutely perſiſted in promoting his own way, though Henry Conway ſometimes ventured to declare his notions of felicity were very different.

Mrs. Conway too, whoſe mildneſs of temper and love of quiet unfitted her for contention, ſometimes coincided with her ſon. But their ſentiments were ſo oppoſite to thoſe of Mr. Conway, that theſe differences of opinion uſually produced unpleaſant altercations and gloomy looks; they were therefore generally avoided by Mrs. Conway, whoſe affection for her ſon made her inwardly lament, that in circumſtances ſo eſſential their views ſo widely differed.

CHAP. IX.

The Virtues conquer with a ſingle look;
Such grace, ſuch beauty, ſuch victorious light
Live in their preſence, ſtream in every glance,
That the ſoul, won, enamour'd, and refin'd,
Grows their own image, pure ethereal flame.
LIBERTY.

MRS. CONWAY, with increaſing anxiety, ſaw the day arrive that was to ſeparate her from Ethelreda; and, determined to indulge herſelf in taking leave of her without the interruption of her niece's company, ſhe went alone to St. Siffrid's.

Here ſhe found Ethelreda and Mrs. Harwood in a dreſſing-room; the latter was at work, and on the countenance of the former were viſibly ſeen the traces of tears.

"I come, my dear Mrs. Harwood," ſaid Mrs. Conway, "to take leave of you and Mrs. Carloville. We quit the country to-morrow! It is ſome weeks earlier than we intended. I am not however without hopes of ſeeing you in town," ſhe continued.

Mrs. Harwood ſaid her ſituation prevented travelling for ſome time, but added: "When I have quitted my room, I hope to perſuade my ſiſter and Mr. Harwood to paſs a month in town."

Mrs. Conway politely and tenderly preſſed Mrs Carloville to promiſe ſhe would be perſuaded. "Nothing in the world," ſaid ſhe, riſing to depart, "would give me ſo much pleaſure, as the expectation of ſometimes ſeeing you. I ſhall then

then have loſt my ſon; and no one in the world could ſo amply ſupply the loſs of his company as Mrs. Carloville, whoſe temper and diſpoſition ſeem to me the counterpart of his! She tenderly kiſſed the cheek of the ſilent Ethelreda, and preſſing her hand with affection, "Lady Octavia, my love, talks of calling on you this morning: but do not ſtay within on that account, ſhe may poſſibly defer her viſit till to-morrow." With a thouſand good wiſhes and tender charges to be careful of her health, Mrs. Conway ſtepped into her carriage, leaving Ethelreda ſtupified with the intelligence of Conway's ſpeedy marriage, and determined to avail herſelf of the fore-knowledge of Octavia's viſit, by walking into the park.

She returned not to the Caſtle till the ſound of the ſecond bell warned her to leave the watch-tower, where ſhe had been enjoying the melancholy pleaſure of looking through a teleſcope towards Strathener, and in fancying ſhe ſaw Conway hand his mother from the carriage.

On returning to the houſe ſhe ſaw lying on a table cards with the names of Lady Octavia and Mr. Conway. "He has been here then with Lady Octavia!" ſaid ſhe to herſelf in a low and tremulous tone. "They go to-morrow! and I may never ſee him again! But why do I wiſh it?" cried ſhe, wildly claſping her hands, "am I not the wife of Carloville!"

The terrible name ſounded tremendouſly in her ears as ſhe pronounced it; and the footſteps and voices of perſons approaching filled her with fears leſt her paſſionate exclamation had been heard, and that a thouſand diſcoveries would be made by Harwood and her ſiſter from a countenance covered with confuſion, and agitated by the crueleſt apprehenſions. She drew her hat over her eyes, and, turning towards the window, endeavoured to recover her tranquillity.

Unconſcious

Unconſcious of what was paſſing, her eyes fixed, but looking at nothing, ſhe ſtood with her back towards the door, when the voice of Lord Caerleon diſturbed her reverie, and obliged her to look round. The impertinent attentions and florid compliments with which Lord Caerleon always accoſted her, had long been diſguſting and irkſome; and the exhauſted ſpirits of Ethelreda at this unpleaſant and unexpected interruption diſtreſſed her almoſt to tears; ſhe looked towards the door in hopeleſs expectation of ſeeing more viſitors.

"I hope I do not interrupt you, Madam?" ſaid Lord Caerleon, obſerving ſomething extraordinary in her looks and manner.

"No, my Lord," replied ſhe with evident inſincerity. "On the contrary, your arrival is extremely well timed. I have been copying the Coloſſeum this morning; but I am apprehenſive I have made ſome capital miſtakes in the perſpective. Do, my Lord, correct them for me," continued Ethelreda, anxious to engage him in ſome employment till the arrival of Mr. Harwood or her ſiſter.

"Anfiteatro Flavio non è circo, è elliptico," ſaid he, affectedly attempting to mend ſome lines in the perſpective. "But why do I ſpend my time upon the Coloſſeum?" cried he, throwing down the pencil, and ſeizing Ethelreda's hand; "Theſe few ſhort moments I have gained, may be uſed to more advantage! Let us go to Rome, charming Mrs. Carloville! There you may employ yourſelf from morning till night, in taking views of the moſt magnificent city in the world. We will make the whole tour of Italy together; and at Venice, for I am perſuaded *you* will prefer it, we will hire a palazzo, and, freed from the diſagreeable and irkſome idea of dependence, you ſhall rule me and my fortune with a ſway the moſt abſolute!"

"What,"

"What," cried the aſtoniſhed Ethelreda, endeavouring to extricate her hand, which he forcibly held, "what have I done to deſerve this treatment? Tell me inſtantly!" with a kind of agonized impatience, "tell me how I have brought upon myſelf this inſulting propoſal? Is it poſſible you, Lord Caerleon, can forget what is due to a woman of character? Do you forget my family? Do you forget that I am married?"

All the hereditary pride of anceſtry, all the indignation of affronted virtue, which the unmerited inſult rouſed in the heart of Ethelreda, threw ſomething ſo commanding into her manner, that, letting go her hand, for a moment the unparalleled effrontery of Lord Caerleon deſerted him, and he remained ſilent, in evident and painful confuſion. But, ſpeedily recovering his uſual undaunted aſſurance, "Really, my pretty Ethelreda, I know every ſyllable you have been ſaying to me in ſo awful a tone. I believe, however," ſaid he with an ironical ſneer, ſhowing the card with Conway's name, "that my ſighing couſin is not *quite* ſo unſucceſsful. But believe me, Mrs. Carloville, je ſuis le meilleur parti."

"Your cruel inſults, and ſtill more inſulting ſuſpicions," cried Ethelreda, "can only be equalled by your inſolence. Oh! you are determined that to you I ſhall owe the bittereſt moments of my life. To your introduction muſt I place my preſent unfortunate connection; and deſerted and friendleſs as I am, you think to wound my feelings with impunity. But I have ſtill a protection in my brother's affection;" reſolutely riſing, and walking towards the door.

"I acknowledge your claims on Mr. Harwood's affection," ſaid Caerleon, placing himſelf ſo as to intercept her retreat, "and I can do him the juſtice to believe he would not be ſlow in anſwering

ſwering them; and I am ſure Mrs. Carloville has generoſity enough to believe, that nothing but the conſciouſneſs of having *offended her* moſt *un*pardonably, could make me at the moment of ſuch an appeal detain her in ſolicitation of her forgiveneſs. I earneſtly entreat your pardon, Mrs. Carloville," continued he. "To ſay that I promiſe never to offend you by my attentions or propoſals, is to offend again: but give me leave to add, were you diſengaged, and diſpoſed to admit my pretenſions, there is not a woman in the world beſides, however elevated her rank, on whom I would beſtow my fortune and my title."

Of her pardon in conſideration of his apology, Mrs. Carloville aſſured him: but too proud to thank him for the oſtentatiouſly condeſcending manner in which he made it, ſhe coldly bid him good morrow; and Lord Caerleon took his departure, mortified at the figure he had made, aſhamed of his propoſals, his vanity not a little wounded by the contempt with which they had been received, and penetrated with the accumulated misfortunes of Mrs. Carloville, with which ſhe had ſo pathetically reproached him as the cauſe.

The heart of Lord Caerleon, though warped by example, and ſwayed by faſhion, was not naturally bad: but vanity and affectation divided him between them; and three or four years reſidence in Italy and France had operated ſo powerfully to form his character, that Lord Caerleon, who before his departure was a handſome agreeable coxcomb with very little harm in him, had returned a ſupercilious mixture of French levity and Italian profligacy. For the manners of the latter country he was a declared advocate—— he could ſpeak in no language but Italian; he could bear no ſounds but Italian; all other muſic was *tramontane* and horrid; the face of his own country

country was deteſtable, compared to the banks of the *Brenta*; and the ſcrubby-looking cropped trees about Rome he preferred to the moſt luxuriant woods in Wales. No wonder then, that in ſupport of his favourite ſyſtem he propoſed himſelf as the *cavaliere ſervente* of Mrs. Carloville, whoſe beauty in all probability would have diſpleaſed him, had not her large dark eyes and regular features reminded him of the intereſting Venetian ladies.

CHAP. X.

—— His happieſt choice too late
Shall meet already link'd and wedlock-bound
To a fell adverſary, his hate or ſhame;
Which infinite calamity ſhall cauſe
To human life, and houſehold peace confound.
PAR. LOST, book x.

CONWAY felt no very violent diſappointment at meeting none of the inhabitants of the Caſtle. To have ſeen Ethelreda, and to have taken leave of her coldly and formally under the ſcrutiniſing eye of Octavia, would have been infinitely more painful than to depart without ſeeing her at all. Having uſed a hundred vain pretences to go alone, notwithſtanding Lady Octavia's declared intention of accompanying him, he was at laſt obliged to ſubmit to the puniſhment of joining her on horſeback in her purpoſed viſit to St. Siffrid's.

This mortifying interruption did not ſerve to raiſe his ſpirits, or ſtimulate him to be more atten-

tive; nor did the continual efforts of his companion to draw him into converſation produce more than dull monoſyllables, to queſtions twice repeated; and abſent anſwers to remarks, in the opinion of Lady Octavia the moſt intereſting and ſentimental.

This ill-aſſorted party was returning ſlowly from the Caſtle, if poſſible more ſilent than it came; for Octavia, irritated by his extreme abſence, with ſome difficulty reſtrained herſelf from upbraidings, in anxious and ſullen expectation of ſomething like an apology from Conway. But ſhe might have waited for ever; for, loſt in his own unpleaſant reflections, he had forgotten that ſhe exiſted, and no more dreamed of ſpeaking to her than if ſhe had been ten leagues inſtead of ten ſteps from his elbow.

Lady Octavia's patience at length was exhauſted:—"Mrs. Carloville would have been treated with more civility," ſaid ſhe, in a tone of ironical aſperity; "or her viſible partiality is much miſplaced."

"Mrs. Carloville!"—ſaid Conway, inſtantly turning his horſe's head and taking ſome ſteps towards the Caſtle, "I do not ſee her."

"Nor I either," cried Octavia, burſting into an hyſterical laugh; "but the magic of her name has completely rouſed you from your reverie. I am aſtoniſhed," continued ſhe, "that the prudent, reſerved, delicate Mrs. Carloville does not take more pains to conceal her ſcandalous preference. The ſcrupulous Mr. Conway, too, ſeems to have reconciled himſelf to the character of a married woman's gallant, which he maintains with wonderful———"

"Utter not another ſyllable, Lady Octavia, to the prejudice o Mrs. Carloville's reputation, or, by heavens, you will provoke me to tell you truths too

too ſevere for an envious and irritated woman to bear!" Conway's lips trembled with paſſion whilſt he ſpoke in a voice that made Octavia ſtart with terror, whilſt he proceeded, his reſpiration almoſt ſtopt by his rage: "That I have never loved you, you muſt have perceived; and a woman with any ſentiment of pride, of modeſty or true delicacy, would have *ſhrunk* from the very ſhadow of perſecuting a man into affection. That I *muſt* marry you, you know as well as I do, becauſe I have no reſources independent of my father: but if in your marriage you expect happineſs and find yourſelf diſappointed, remember that your huſband forewarned you of the vanity of your expectations."

The tone, the piercing eye of Conway directed towards her as he ſpoke, almoſt annihilated the aſtoniſhed Octavia: the vehemence of his manner, and the courage with which he told her his diſlike, ſurpriſed her more than the explanation of his ſentiments. But, more mortified than grieved, more ſtimulated to revenge, than oppreſſed by the knowledge of her unreturned preference, ſhe attempted not to ſpeak; ſhe thought not of recriminating by words, ſenſibly perſuaded that conciliatory meaſures were more expedient than open defiance.

Conway, whoſe violent agitation a few moments of ſilence and reflection had completely calmed, was grieved to the heart at having ſpoken ſo harſhly, in the fury of his paſſion, to a woman who, notwithſtanding his incredulity on the ſubject, *might* love him with unfeigned affection: but the acrimony and envy with which Octavia had ſpoken of Mrs. Carloville recurring to his mind, would prevent him from apologizing for his own aſperity; and the hints ſhe had given of Ethelreda's preference, whilſt they raiſed a momentary pleaſure in his breaſt, determined him to

make

make one more effort to ſee her before his departure, though he knew not himſelf what purpoſe could poſſibly be anſwered by ſo hopeleſs yet fondly deſired an indulgence.

When this extraordinary pair of lovers returned to the caſtle, they were met by Mrs. Conway, who obſerved the extreme vexation in their countenances, and drew from thence preſages fatal to her own peace and that of her family. Lady Octavia diſmounted from her horſe with the aſſiſtance of a ſervant, and, ſlightly ſpeaking, hurried into the houſe:

"Do not expect me at dinner, Madam," ſaid Conway to his mother, whoſe eyes were fixed on him with a ſtrong expreſſion of grief and enquiry. "I intend to lengthen my ride; in all probability I ſhall not return in time." Without waiting for an anſwer he ſpurred his horſe, and, calling to his ſervant not to follow him, was ſoon at a conſiderable diſtance from Strathener.

The tumultuous agitation of his mind ſubſided by degrees; and as he grew more calm, the conſequences of his raſhneſs in ſpeaking ſo unguardedly to Octavia ſtruck him forcibly. "She will infallibly diſcover to my father my unfortunate predilection," ſaid he to himſelf; "ſhe will revenge herſelf on me, by attacking the unblemiſhed character of Ethelreda; and by haſtening my marriage my father will ſufficiently puniſh my intemperate paſſion."

The horſe had inſenſibly wandered a conſiderable diſtance, when, meeting with the road to St. Siffrid's, to take which for ſome months he had been conſtantly accuſtomed, he walked on at a quick pace, unheeded by his maſter, who awoke not from his perplexing dreams till the horſe ſtopped at the inner gate.

The

The ſight of the Caſtle, and the ſudden appearance of Caerleon, who was about to depart at the moment of Conway's arrival, diſconcerted and ſurpriſed him ſo much, that, inſtantly turning his horſe's head, he took the road back without uttering a ſyllable.

He was, however ill diſpoſed for converſation, ſpeedily joined by his couſin, who, having not yet forgotten his recent mortification, was equally ſilent. Conway ſtill heavily meditated on his own grievances; but Lord Caerleon, whoſe ſpirits ſeldom deſerted him, ſuddenly burſting into a laugh, called to his companion; "Pray, Conway, may I aſk what brought you back ſo ſoon to St. Siffrid's? Was it to look for me? That certainly was the *oſtenſible* part of your errand, or you would not have returned ſo inſtantaneouſly at the ſight of me."

"Really," ſaid Conway, half ſmiling at the awkwardneſs of ſuch a rencontre, "nothing was farther from my thoughts. When I left Strathener," continued he," "I intended going towards the beach; and how I got to St. Siffrid's——"

"I muſt aſk your horſe, I ſuppoſe?"

"My horſe," ſaid Conway, "does not ſpeak *toſcanamente*; and to be anſwered in the language of the Houynhnms would be grating beyond all endurance." Here Conway turned into another road, and Lord Caerleon purſued his way to Strathener, not too much pleaſed at his couſin's repartee, and confirmed in thoſe ſuſpicions he had before hinted to Ethelreda.

If the viſible confuſion of Conway had ſurpriſed Lord Caerleon, the apparent abſence and depreſſion that ſeemed to have ſpread itſelf over the inhabitants of Strathener Caſtle was not leſs a matter of ſpeculation. That Lady Mariamne was ſilent and reſerved, he thought was owing to an

an accumulation of haughtineſs; that Lady Octavia was low-ſpirited, he attributed to an overflow of ſentiment; and his aunt he knew was ſubject to reveries: but why Sir Francis and his uncle ſhould look ſo gloomy, he was at a loſs to explain to himſelf. Indeed, he ſeldom gave himſelf the trouble to diſcover what motives actuated thoſe of his own family, either to loquacity or ſilence; but at length, diverted from his reflections by the woeful countenance of Sir Francis, Lord Caerleon enquired if any thing had happened to occaſion ſo melancholy a viſage?

Sir Francis heſitated, and without anſwering the queſtion——"Pray my lord, has any thing *particular* happened to you?"

"No," ſaid Caerleon careleſsly; "but the ſight of ſo many doleful faces has had a ſtrange effect on my ſpirits."

"I proteſt that is exactly my caſe, for till your Lordſhip's arrival I was really in excellent ſpirits: but as you ſay, example has a wonderful effect."

"Pray, Lord Caerleon," ſaid Mrs. Conway, who, as evening approached, betrayed manifeſt ſigns of uneaſineſs, "do you know any thing of Henry?"

"Mr. Henry Conway," ſaid Lord Caerleon, the ſneer at *la lengua Toſcana* ſtill freſh in his memory, "when I ſaw him laſt, was in about as pleaſant a temper as the preſent company; I believe, meditating a viſit to the caſtle."

"To the Caſtle!" exclaimed Mr. Conway with ſurpriſe and agitation. "You do not know what carried him to the Caſtle, Lord Caerleon?"

"Indeed I do not," ſaid Caerleon riſing, and gaping repeatedly; "it appeared to me he did not know himſelf very clearly. I had ſome thoughts of aſking him," continued he "but he

took

took a very precipitate leave, or rather, none at all. We ſhall ſee him at ſupper—perhaps."

This information by no means contributed to reſtore gaiety to the ſilent party. Mr. Conway ſtaid not many moments in the room, but departed to his ſtudy.

CHAP. XI.

Che non puo far d'un cuor, ch'abbia ſoggetto
Queſto crudel e traditor Amore?——

OR. FUR.

CONWAY, when he left his couſin, took the firſt road that preſented itſelf, merely becauſe he would not return to Strathener. He was exceſſively diſtreſſed at the unfortunate diſcoveries of the morning; but that he had met Lord Caerleon ſo mal-à-propos, gave him not much concern. He knew him too careleſs of the affairs of his family, and too proud and manly, to repeat any trivial circumſtance to his diſadvantage; unconſcious of the intereſt Lord Caerleon took in every thing relating to Ethelreda, and dreading nothing but the machinations of Lady Octavia.

In this pitiable ſtate of mind Conway paſſed all the remainder of the day; riding from one place to another for relief, but more eſpecially to avoid meeting any living creature to whom it would be neceſſary for him to ſpeak. Sometimes his thoughts were occupied in contriving how to ſee Ethelreda——A thouſand plans were formed, and rejected as ſpeedily; at one moment he would deteſt himſelf for wiſhing to involve her in all the miſeries of hopeleſs paſſion, which he himſelf felt

ſo

ſo acutely; and then the wretched hope that ſhe was equally unfortunate, whilſt he abhorred himſelf for encouraging it, would animate him to an explanation. "If I can ſpeak to her——if I tell her my deſpair, ſhe will pity me, and her compaſſion will conſole me for the miſeries of my whole life. But ſhe is married! and her purity will take alarm at the bare idea of hearing me confeſs how much I love her: ſhe will forgive me, but ſhe will refuſe to ſee me, and I ſhall loſe the melancholy pleaſure of looking at her—— hearing her ſpeak!"

It grew dark whilſt Conway continued making theſe incoherent reflections. He had loſt his way; he had taken no refreſhment; he had not even recollected that any was neceſſary to his exiſtence; and he continued wandering in the dark in uncertainty three hours, during which he had repeatedly been wetted by ſhowers; till at eleven o'clock he found himſelf, without any effort on his part, at Strathener; undetermined and irreſolute whether he ſhould go that moment to St. Siffrid's, or give up his idle hopes for ever.

He went however into the Caſtle. The family had ſeparated ſome time: Mrs. Conway alone in the eating parlour waited her ſon's arrival. She heard him as he entered the room, and knew his ſtep; ſhe roſe to walk towards him; but his countenance frightened her, ſhe doubted whether it was her ſon:—"Is it you, Henry?"

"It is."

"For heaven's ſake, what is the matter? What has happened to you?"

"Nothing! Nothing has happened!" ſaid he haſtily: "You know I am unhappy; you know all the world cannot make me otherwiſe; yet you aſk me what has happened, as if my ſituation were

were not the moſt miſerable and hopeleſs."—He took a candle from the table and walked towards the door—he ſtood there ſome moments in ſilence, then wiſhed his mother good night, and diſappeared.

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The morning, though foggy, was very fine; and Mr. Conway, having charged the ladies to be ready at eight, as he intended taking the fourth place in their coach, waited in a very indifferent humour their arrival.

Henry Conway, with Lord Trecaſtle, Lord Caerleon and Sir Francis L'Eiterling, had reſolved to make part of their journey on horſeback. Sir Francis wiſhed for Lord Caerleon's opinion on a houſe he was about to take; it was that which Mr. Harwood had ſo lately quitted, and which was ſtill without a tenant. Lady Mariamne had given a ſort of half conſent to living there in the ſummer; and as her ladyſhip uſually refuſed to give any to Sir Francis's propoſals, he, preſuming on her gracious condeſcenſion, had determined to take it, provided it met with Lord Caerleon's approbation; very wiſely concluding if his brother liked it he ſhould alſo, and that if ſuch an arrangement had been diſagreeable to his lady, ſhe would flatly have forbidden even his looking at Kilgaren-hall.

Lord Trecaſtle, with his uſual hoſpitality, had cordially entreated his ſon-in-law to take up his ſummer reſidence at Strathener: and Sir Francis would willingly have complied; but the Caſtle, though

though not ſo large, was ſcarcely leſs dreary than St. Siffrid's: and a circumſtance had occurred to confirm him in what he had before ſtrongly ſuſpected, that Strathener was not leſs the abode of ghoſts than the deſerted St. Siffrid's; and to theſe his averſion was ſo rooted, that not even Lord Caerleon's example could have reconciled him to them, though his model had profeſſed an attachment as ſtrong as that of ſome of the illuſtrious and honourable houſe of Hohenzollern.

The reſtleſs footſteps of Conway, who had paſſed the night in walking his room, contributed moſtly towards Sir Francis's removal; for in effect the old rooms of the Caſtle were very ſeldom viſited by any of the inhabitants of the other world: though, as is generally the caſe with *caſtles*, Strathener had procured itſelf the reputation of being as *creditably haunted*, as any caſtle or priory in the principality.

The coach and its company were departed: and the gentlemen only waited for Conway, when he made his appearance in the court, and intreated them to go on before him. His horſe, he ſaid, muſt be ſhod, and he would overtake them on the road or at Kilgaren.

Lord Caerleon roguiſhly ſaid, he would wait for him, and Sir Francis very complaiſantly propoſed to do the ſame; but Lord Trecaſtle, finding himſelf in danger either of waiting an hour or of riding alone, propoſed to go on with Sir Francis; and Lord Caerleon, who only meant to enjoy his couſin's embarraſſment (for he had penetrated his motive), immediately followed. Conway watched them out of ſight: then charging his ſervant to meet him on the road with the horſes, he ſet out on foot for St. Siffrid's; having determined in his own mind, formally to take leave of the ladies with all the calmneſs of an indifferent

different perſon; but to go, without *ſeeing* Ethelreda was abſolutely impoſſible.

He walked extremely faſt, and arrived at the Caſtle without having met a creature. As it happened, there were no ſervants about the courts; the doors were only latched, and Conway traverſed without any impediment the long galleries and paſſages, till he came to the room in which he knew the ladies uſually paſſed their mornings.

He opened the door gently, and ſaw alone, at the upper end, Ethelreda leaning her head upon her hands. Conway would have returned without ſpeaking; but the ſound of his footſteps alarmed her, and ſhe looked round. "Is it poſſible?" ſhe exclaimed involuntarily, and in the the utmoſt confuſion.

"You are undoubtedly ſurpriſed to ſee me," ſaid Conway, advancing towards her. "I came, Mrs. Carloville, to ſee you and Mrs. Harwood, and to aſk if I can execute any commiſſions for you in town?"—looking towards the harp that ſtood near.

"You are very good. Shall I trouble you to order ſome muſic for me?"

Conway made no anſwer; and both for ſeveral minutes ſat in the moſt diſtreſſing ſilence. At length Ethelreda aroſe——"I will let my ſiſter know you are here."

"By no means!" cried Conway, ſtarting from his chair, and walking towards the door, which he ſhut. "I *cannot* leave you, Mrs. Carloville!"

"Mr. Conway!"——ſaid Ethelreda, turning pale, and then bluſhing deeply.

"I feel the impropriety of telling you ſo; I feel that I am baniſhing myſelf from you for ever! Yet I cannot avoid making the moſt hopeleſs and miſerable paſſion my excuſe for a thouſand unpardonable

pardonable abſurdities, of which I have been guilty.——I ſee your aſtoniſhment, your indignation! You think me mad, perhaps; but my reaſon has not quite deſerted me, though I tell you ——that I am the moſt wretched creature in exiſtence!"

Ethelreda burſt into tears, which ſhe would have given worlds to reſtrain.

"I knew I ſhould diſtreſs you, Ethelreda," ſaid he; "but I am become ſelfiſh, and the tears you are now ſhedding, will, for the remainder of my life, be my only conſolation." As he ſpoke, his voice faltered ſo much, the laſt words were ſcarcely intelligible: his whole appearance was ſo extraordinary, the tone of his voice was ſo piercing, and in in his eye and on his cheek were ſuch evident ſymptoms of fever, that Ethelreda actually concluded he was delirious; and, unable to articulate a ſyllable, ſhe ſaw him depart precipitately, and apparently with ſenſations of the keeneſt anguiſh; without any effort, on her part, either to ſpeak to or detain him.

"Oh Conway!" ſaid ſhe, "If my wretchedneſs will alleviate yours, why did you depart till I had told you all my ſufferings; till I had convinced you, mine were more poignant?"

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Equale è di pazzia ſegno più eſpreſſo,
Che per altri voler, perder ſe ſteſſo?
ARIOSTO, cant. xxv.

WHEN Conway joined his companions, the tumult of his ſpirits had partly ſubſided: but the exertion of riding had conſiderably increaſed his fever; and the fatigues of the preceding day, the ſleepleſs night, and the diſtreſſing events of the morning, had rendered him ſo languid, that, ſcarcely able to proceed, he was repeatedly on the point of declaring his inability, and his intention of returning to Strathener. But leſt Lord Caerleon, and more eſpecially his father ſhould doubt the ſincerity of his indiſpoſition, and ſet it down only as an excuſe to return; tenderneſs for the character of Mrs. Carloville, and a deſpairing careleſſneſs about what might befall himſelf, reanimated him to purſue his journey, and even to appear cheerful; whilſt his countenance and his incoherent converſation gave evident tokens of bodily indiſpoſition and mental derangement.

Theſe diſtreſſing ſymptoms however were loſt on his companions, whoſe hearts more at eaſe prevented them from ſympathizing in his miſeries. Lord Caerleon proteſted he was the moſt ſingular perſonage he had ever met with: he was at a loſs to know what *capriccio bizarro* could induce a man to throw ſo many abſurdities into his manners and diſcourſe: but Lord Trecaſtle with more feeling and diſcernment declared his nephew was unfit to ride on horſeback; and without conſulting

ſulting him diſpatched a ſervant to detain the coach till Conway's arrival, intending to perſuade him to give up his horſe to his father, and take the vacant ſeat in the coach.

Lord Trecaſtle was impatient to execute his judicious arrangement; he therefore left Sir Francis and his ſon at Kilgaren; and perſuading Conway without much difficulty to proceed with him, they ſoon overtook the carriage.

Conway would willingly have continued his journey on horſeback; but the united entreaties of his father and mother and Lord Trecaſtle at length prevailed on him to take a place in the coach. Mrs. Conway, ſhocked beyond meaſure at his appearance, beſought him to tell her what ailed him, and how long he had been ill.

Conway was grieved at his mother's diſtreſs, and endeavoured to make her think lightly of his illneſs, declaring it was only a cold occaſioned by the ſhowers that had wetted him quite through the night before. "If I had gone to bed," continued he, "I might perhaps have eſcaped it; but I am certain I ſhould not have ſlept; and when that is the caſe, it is of very little conſequence whether a man paſſes the night in his bed, or in walking his room!"

"Good heavens! my dear Henry, did you then paſs the night in your damp clothes? How much you diſtreſs and alarm me!"

"I certainly had not the ſmalleſt intention of doing either the one or the other. But," continued he, with a ſmile, "do not lament it ſo much, and do not by any means alarm yourſelf; for it is my uſual manner of paſſing the night, and what one is accuſtomed to cannot have bad conſequences."

"You mean, when you are at ſea?"

"Always.

"Always. Indeed I find it infinitely more refreſhing than ſleep."

Mrs. Conway now perceived that her ſon talked without knowing himſelf what he ſaid; ſhe entreated him to compoſe himſelf, and endeavour to ſleep a little in the carriage.

Without apologizing to either of the ladies, or indeed without knowing they were preſent, Conway ſoon fell into a dozing ſleep, to the very great ſatisfaction of his mother, who expected him to wake recruited and well.

Neither Lady Octavia nor her ſiſter had taken the trouble to ſay they were ſorry for his illneſs, nor had they tried to conſole and re-aſſure Mrs. Conway, who expreſſed her apprehenſions in the moſt affecting manner. Lady Mariamne kept her face turned towards one of the windows; and Octavia, entirely occupied with her reſentment, had none of the traces of good humour on her countenance or in her manner.

The journey was performed without much ſatisfaction to any of the party; the ſullenneſs of the two ladies continued without intermiſſion through the whole of it; and Mrs. Conway's conſternation increaſed with her ſon's diſorder, which, inſtead of proving only a temporary cold, ſeemed to threaten a moſt ſerious illneſs. Had it been poſſible to have perſuaded him, Mrs. Conway would have remained on the road: but, with all the vehemence of a feveriſh and agitated mind, he perſiſted in declaring he was well, and in purſuing his journey; ſo that, when he reached London, entirely exhauſted in ſtrength and no longer able to oppoſe the requeſts of his mother, he ſubmitted to ſee a phyſician, who pronounced him in a high fever. His diſorder became rapidly worſe: in his delirium, which laſted many days without intermiſſion, he inceſſantly proteſted againſt

againſt a marriage with Octavia; and his father heard him declare, with horror, he would die to avoid it! Mrs. Conway's grief, and that of the whole family, was little ſhort of diſtraction; even Caerleon, whoſe volatile ſpirits and love of amuſement had ſeldom given way, was continually waiting in the houſe for favourable accounts. Lady Octavia alone ſeemed ſtudious to ſhew her indifference, if poſſible without any mixture of reſentment: ſhe regularly ſent her ſervant every day to make enquiries, whilſt ſhe purſued her amuſements with as much avidity as if nothing had occurred to interrupt them. Lord Trecaſtle, much diſpleaſed at ſuch unfeeling conduct, tried to controul Lady Octavia by his commands; but ſhe declared ſo poſitively ſhe ſhould die if ſhe did not amuſe herſelf, that the point was not carried, and Lord Trecaſtle contented himſelf with declaring his nephew ſhould have his free conſent to ſet aſide the marriage.

This declaration, alarming as it would have been to Mr. Conway, never came to his knowledge. His whole time was occupied in watching and attendance on his ſon, whoſe life was deſpaired of, and whom his phyſicians owned it was no longer in the power of medicine to ſave.

Many were the vows and promiſes made by Mr. Conway of never interfering in his future happineſs, ſhould Conway be reſtored. Whether their ſincerity or Mrs. Conway's prayers were moſt efficacious, certain it is a favourable turn in the diſorder began to give the phyſicians hopes of the life of their patient. Theſe hopes they cautiouſly communicated to his mother, who, forgetting all her fatigues, reſolutely perſiſted in attending her ſon; re-animated with the probability of ſaving his life, and delighting herſelf with the idea

idea that in a great meaſure he owed it to her care and unremitted watching.

CHAP. XIII.

Things at the worſt will ceaſe, or elſe climb upward
To what they were before.

MACBETH.

SCARCELY leſs melancholy and deſponding paſſed the days of Ethelreda. A prey to the moſt acute and heart-rending ſorrows, no objects had the power of alleviating them, nor of drawing her thoughts one moment from the diſtracted image of Conway. If ſhe walked on the beach, ſhe ſaw no other object; if ſhe ſhut herſelf from company, ſhe fancied ſhe ſtill ſaw him, worn down by fever and deprived of intellects and reflection. Not a day paſſed in which ſhe did not riſe with the expectation of hearing ſome melancholy and fatal tidings concerning him; for that he ſtill exiſted, ſhe could ſcarcely perſuade herſelf. Or if this terrible idea for a moment deſerted her, the certainty of his marriage would ruſh into her mind, and deſtroy every remaining wiſh for happineſs.

In this pitiable ſtate, torn and haraſſed by a thouſand fears, the temper of Ethelreda was become irritable, and that ſweetneſs that never failed to charm, was ſeldom diſcernible in her character. Of this change in her diſpoſition ſhe was not inſenſible; but ſhe had loſt all deſire to pleaſe, and attempted not to conquer it, or to conceal that ſhe was diſſatisfied and unhappy.

This appearance of diſcontent did not fail to ſtrike Mrs. Harwood with compaſſion and ſorrow. She would willingly have enquired the cauſe, but Ethelreda induſtriouſly avoided all converſation that could lead to the ſubject of her depreſſion and melancholy; and when entreated to tell it, ſhe would declare her ſpirits were not unuſually low, or perhaps, with ſome impatience, that her dejection was conſtitutional. Theſe anſwers and evaſions increaſed Mrs. Harwood's tender apprehenſions for the peace of her ſiſter; and that ſhe had loſt her confidence, was a ſource of never-failing regret.

Months rolled away imperceptibly; it was January, and Ethelreda was almoſt entirely confined to her ſiſter's room, who had lain-in of a daughter. This circumſtance in ſome meaſure diverted her ſorrows; and an ardent deſire to conceal them from her ſiſter, diſguiſed, without diminiſhing, them. Here ſhe paſſed the day in reading, or in appearing to read, or in careſſing the children, whilſt ſhe inwardly meditated on her own misfortunes, and thoſe of Conway.

When Harwood was at home, which was generally the caſe, he ſpent moſt of his time in his wife's room; and Ethelreda, eagerly ſeizing the firſt opportunity of being alone, would retire to ſome unfrequented room, ſure of enjoying uninterrupted ſolitude. Theſe deſolate moments were thoſe in which Ethelreda placed the only remaining pleaſure of her life. She could there indulge herſelf in tears or in converſations, ſecure that ſhe ſhould neither be ſurpriſed nor overheard.

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Lord

Lord Caerleon, who, though he had been too much accuſtomed to uninterrupted proſperity to feel much for the ſufferings of others, yet ſaw Conway's with ſome ſorrow; and as abſence never failed to relieve his lordſhip's miſeries, the recollection of Ethelreda's beauty and charms grew fainter from day to day, and he no longer envied but pitied the preference he imagined he had diſcovered in his couſin's favour; reſolving, as the moſt eſſential ſervice he could do Conway and his ſiſter, to prevent the latter from marrying him.

But the ſtate of Conway's health ſtill placing that event at a diſtance, Lord Caerleon thought he might as well take a trip to the Continent with a friend of Conway's, Lord Beralſtone, who was going to eſcort his ſiſter to England. Miſs Beralſtone had quitted Paris for Bruſſels, in company with ſome foreigners of diſtinction, who, fancying themſelves obnoxious to the riſing faction, were amongſt the firſt to emigrate. But, as the Auſtrian Netherlands were not thought to be in any ſtate of ſecurity from the invading armies, Lord Beralſtone was anxious to ſee his ſiſter ſafe in England, and to offer an aſylum to friends who had ſhown her many attentions during the time her education detained her in Paris.

Miſs Beralſtone was near nineteen years of age; tall, finely made, with very light-brown hair, large dark blue eyes, dark eyelaſhes and brows, and the reddeſt lips and the whiteſt teeth in the world; with manners ſo ſoft and engaging it was abſolutely impoſſible, for Lord Caerleon eſpecially, to ſee her without expreſſing the warmeſt admiration. He therefore, in the courſe of three days' reſidence with her at the houſe of her friend, Madame de Clerac-Auxerre, had

found ſo many opportunities of paying elegant *Italian* compliments to *la bella Roſmunda*, in ſpite of the vigilant attentions of the young Count, that he had nearly made formal propoſals to the lady and her brother, when an unexpected event precipitately and effectually altered the courſe of his operations.

Lord Beralſtone and his friend De Clerac ſtrolled out together one morning whilſt Caerleon ſat by the harpſichord watching the "flying fingers" of the beautiful Roſamond, and liſtening to the ſweeter melody of her voice. In the courſe of their rambles Beralſtone recognized two Engliſh acquaintances, whom De Clerac very politely entreated to dine with him. The ladies were otherwiſe engaged; and De Clerac, who profeſſed to dote on Engliſh manners, tried all in his power to make them tipſy. In this very gentlemanlike conteſt the Count very nearly ſucceeded with his gueſts, but with himſelf ſtill more completely; for he could ſcarcely ſupport himſelf on his feet, and was become ſo extremely noiſy and riotous, and ſo determined on going to a gaming-hotel in the neighbourhood, that his party had no power of refuſing.

Here they met with ſeveral of De Clerac's friends, playing games of chance. Lord Beralſtone, Sir Philip Almerſley and his brother immediately began to bet; and Caerleon and De Clerac, who were particularly troubleſome to the players, ſtrolled into another room.

De Clerac immediately propoſed to a gentleman in a German uniform, apparently of his acquaintance, to play. He conſented, and they ſat down. Caerleon was ſtill ſufficiently in his ſenſes to perceive that the Count might be plundered with impunity; and though he was by no means clear

clear enough to pronounce his antagoniſt a cheat, he inſiſted, after a few moments' obſervation, on De Clerac's returning with him to his own houſe.

The ſtranger reſented Lord Caerleon's behaviour in rather rude terms. Caerleon, always eaſily irritated, did not now wait for provocation to juſtify ſuch an outrage, but moſt unceremoniouſly knocked him down; and, leaving him on the floor, walked very leiſurely into the ſtreet with as much coolneſs as if nothing unuſual had occurred.

He was preſently overtaken by the ſtranger, whom De Clerac was incapable of following. "Draw! Caerleon!" cried he.

Caerleon immediately complied; and, notwithſtanding his ſtate of inebriety, ran his antagoniſt through, who fell immediately. Caerleon concluded he was dead; and though he was ſcarcely in his ſenſes during the whole of this tranſaction, yet ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with the idea of having been the aggreſſor in this unfortunate rencontre, Caerleon thought his only ſecurity was in making his eſcape.

From Oſtend he wrote to Lord Beralſtone, informing him that an expreſs from his father had occaſioned his precipitate removal. Of De Clerac he ſaid nothing, perfectly ſecure that the abovementioned circumſtances would never tranſpire by his means, and as he was the only ſpectator, no other was to be feared.

When Lord Caerleon's recollection returned, he repented his precipitancy; and a thouſand fears leſt he ſhould loſe ground in the good opinion of Roſamond Beralſtone, made him a thouſand times reſolve to return to Bruſſels, to which the poſſibility of his not having killed the man with

found ſo many opportunities of paying elegant *Italian* compliments to *la bella Roſmunda*, in ſpite of the vigilant attentions of the young Count, that he had nearly made formal propoſals to the lady and her brother, when an unexpected event precipitately and effectually altered the courſe of his operations.

Lord Beralſtone and his friend De Clerac ſtrolled out together one morning whilſt Caerleon ſat by the harpſichord watching the "flying fingers" of the beautiful Roſamond, and liſtening to the ſweeter melody of her voice. In the courſe of their rambles Beralſtone recognized two Engliſh acquaintances, whom De Clerac very politely entreated to dine with him. The ladies were otherwiſe engaged; and De Clerac, who profeſſed to dote on Engliſh manners, tried all in his power to make them tipſy. In this very gentlemanlike conteſt the Count very nearly ſucceeded with his gueſts, but with himſelf ſtill more completely; for he could ſcarcely ſupport himſelf on his feet, and was become ſo extremely noiſy and riotous, and ſo determined on going to a gaming-hotel in the neighbourhood, that his party had no power of refuſing.

Here they met with ſeveral of De Clerac's friends, playing games of chance. Lord Beralſtone, Sir Philip Almerſley and his brother immediately began to bet; and Caerleon and De Clerac, who were particularly troubleſome to the players, ſtrolled into another room.

De Clerac immediately propoſed to a gentleman in a German uniform, apparently of his acquaintance, to play. He conſented, and they ſat down. Caerleon was ſtill ſufficiently in his ſenſes to perceive that the Count might be plundered with impunity; and though he was by no means

clear

clear enough to pronounce his antagoniſt a cheat, he inſiſted, after a few moments' obſervation, on De Clerac's returning with him to his own houſe.

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with whom he fought, greatly added; when the following paragraph, in a London paper, dated Bruſſels, effectually prevented his return, and filled his volatile head with new projects:

"A few nights ſince, the body of a gentleman was diſcovered lying near the Hotel de ——, bathed in blood. It is ſuppoſed a duel, in conſequence of a quarrel at play, was the cauſe of this unfortunate event. On ſearching the pockets of the deceaſed, two letters were found, directed to The Hon. F. Carloville."

Caerleon was thunderſtruck at this extraordinary news; and particularly that he ſhould not have recogniſed Carloville at the time. But this was eaſily accounted for. He now recollected the circumſtance of the ſtranger's calling him by his name, which, with the place, correſponded ſo exactly that he no longer doubted having been the unfortunate avenger of Ethelreda's injuries.

For ſome days this melancholy adventure preyed upon his ſpirits, and ſuperſeded every wiſh for amuſement or ſelf-gratification. But it was now Ethelreda's turn to reign again. Ethelreda a widow! Conway poſitively engaged! Theſe were irreſiſtible inducements. "Adio, Roſmunda!" ſaid the verſatile Caerleon, as he ſeated himſelf in a chaiſe and four, determined not to ſtop five minutes on the road to St. Siffrid's; and not till he was within ten yards of the gates, did he recollect the impropriety of firſt diſpatching the huſband, and himſelf bringing the tidings to the widow. Some remembrance of the inſulting propoſals he had once made helped to convince him his errand wanted the colour of ſucceſs; he for a moment thought of making over all his advantages to his couſin; and, in a

fit

fit of generoſity too ſudden to laſt, reſolved to plead the cauſe of Conway with all his ſenatorial eloquence.

CHAP. XIV.

Friendſhip is conſtant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore, all hearts in love, uſe your own tongue:
Let every eye negociate for itſelf,
And truſt no agent: beauty is a witch
Againſt whoſe charms faith melteth into blood.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT was the evening of a ſnowy day, and Ethelreda had ſtationed herſelf in the old drawing-room, inſenſible of cold, and regardleſs of the bats that hung upon the crimſon velvet and faded portraits of her anceſtors; when the ſound of feet in the long gallery made her ſtart, and walk towards the door. It opened however before ſhe reached it: an old ſervant with ſome trouble had diſcovered her retreat.

"Is it you, Llewellyn?" ſaid Ethelreda.

"A gentleman, madam!" and he immediately ſhut the door after a ſtranger, who was ſo much muffled up ſhe could ſee nothing of his face.

This intruſion, with ſuch an air of myſtery, had both aſtoniſhed and terrified her ſo much, that ſhe attempted to ſpeak but could not; her faculties were ſuſpended, ſhe did not breathe, firmly believing it was Carloville himſelf.

The

The ſtranger, ſcarcely leſs agitated, fixed his eyes upon her ſome moments in ſilence: "You do not condeſcend to remember me, madam?"—ſaid he in a faultering tone.

Ethelreda was ſtill ſilent.

"If you cannot pardon me, Mrs. Carloville.—"

"It is Lord Caerleon's voice!"—exclaimed Ethelreda, recovering from her terror.

"I know not what to ſay, or how to begin a recital," ſaid Caerleon. "I have broken in upon you ſo abruptly, that inſtead of proceeding to the melancholy ſtory I came purpoſely to relate, I ought to apologize for my intruſion, which has ſo needleſsly alarmed you."

"What ſtory?—Whom do you mean?—Is it Mrs. Conway?—Is it—does it concern—?" Twice Ethelreda was on the point of naming the perſon moſt in her thoughts; but the fear of hearing ſome fatal confirmation of all ſhe apprehended took from her the power of utterance.

Lord Caerleon, alarmed at the paleneſs of her countenance, heſitated—ſtopped.

"I beſeech you to tell me"—cried Ethelreda, "tell me inſtantly! I cannot bear this ſuſpenſe—Without any preamble—tell me this moment what brings you here?"

"I came to tell you, madam," ſaid Caerleon, ſurpriſed at her vehemence, "that you are releaſed from all ties—that Mr. Carloville is no longer—is dead!"

Ethelreda made no anſwer. She leaned againſt the wall to ſupport herſelf, and, pointing towards the door, ſhook her head, as if ſhe doubted the truth of this intelligence.

"I aſſure you upon my honour," cried Caerleon, "that I have ſpoken only the truth."

"I know

"I know not how to believe you—" ſaid Ethelreda faintly. And pardon me, Lord Caerleon, if I tell you, I think your chooſing to be the means of giving me this information, whether true or falſe, is a new inſult."

"Heavens and Earth!" cried Caerleon, ſtamping paſſionately with his foot: "Do you think me capable of it?—And do you imagine, madam, I would impoſe on you with *lies*?"

"You terrify me, ſir," ſaid Ethelreda, endeavouring to reach the door, though ſhe could ſcarcely ſupport herſelf.

Lord Caerleon offered his arm.

"Suffer me to leave you here. I will inform Mr. Harwood of your lordſhip's arrival."

"I was about to requeſt it of you, madam," again ſtamping with paſſion at her refuſal of his aſſiſtance. "Will you permit me to *follow* you, madam?"

Ethelreda made no reply; but ſilently led the way to Harwood's library, where ſhe left her diſguiſed viſitor whilſt ſhe went to inform her brother of the gueſt that awaited him.

Harwood was, as uſual, in his wife's dreſſing-room. Ethelreda briefly told who was in his library, and begged him to haſten down ſtairs. Notwithſtanding, he ſtaid to expreſs his ſurpriſe, and declare his total ignorance as to the buſineſs that could procure him a viſit from Lord Caerleon in the depth of winter.

In the mean time Caerleon had thrown off his fur wrappings, and was meditating in what manner and upon what terms he ſhould addreſs Ethelreda. In the heat of his anger he could not forbear making ſome obſervations not very flattering to her diſpoſition; ſuch as, "no woman, however amiable, ever pardoned an affront;" and ſome others perhaps equally illi-

beral; from which however, with all his vanity, he could draw no very promiſing inferences as to the ſucceſs of his ſuit. And having but little inclination to add to his own mortifications by expoſing himſelf to a refuſal, he had more than once an inclination to make Conway's buſineſs his errand; and take a *noble* revenge on the incredulity of Mrs. Carleville.

Lord Caerleon *poſſeſſed the rudiments* of generoſity: but with a diſpoſition the moſt unſtable, he had been accuſtomed to the moſt uninterrupted enjoyment of his own will. Self-denial was a penance almoſt unknown to him by name: yet ſome faint glimmerings of right and juſtice had told him that Conway ought to have the ſame opportunities of advancing his ſuit; and he felt far from ſatisfied with himſelf for having kept his journey a ſecret. Though he had left London entirely with an intention of ſerving himſelf; though he changed his mind half a dozen times on the road, and entered the Caſtle with the *firmeſt* intention of ſpeaking only of Conway, he finally decided to plead for himſelf; reconciling the juſtice of the buſineſs by Conway's entire ignorance of his proceedings.

Loſt in his reverie, he heard not Harwood enter, who, advancing towards him, proteſted, "Whether he owed this viſit to friendſhip or intereſt, he was equally glad to ſee him; for that a man who would take a journey into Wales in ſuch weather, muſt be powerfully ſtimulated either by one or the other, was incontrovertible."

"One of theſe motives I confeſs is *partly* out of the queſtion," ſaid Caerleon ſmiling. "But you ſeem to have forgotten the *moſt* powerful, Harwood."

"I believe I comprehend your meaning, my lord: but I am ſtill ignorant of any particular concern—"

"Well

"Well then, have the patience to hear me for a minute, and you will be au fait."

Harwood with a droll countenance, promiſed to be very attentive.

"I ſhall ſpeedily convince you," ſaid Caerleon, obſerving him, "that my intelligence is of a ſerious nature. You recollect, I imagine, how much earlier than uſual my father's family quitted Strathener?"

"Yes; three months, I believe?"

"Lord Trecaſtle had buſineſs that called him to town, and he intended returning to ſpend the Chriſtmas at Strathener. But my uncle had his particular reaſons, which though he has not explained I very clearly underſtand, for perſuading my father it was much better for the whole family to leave Strathener at the ſame time: he wiſhed to haſten Lady Octavia's marriage with Conway, who has lately been appointed to the command of a frigate. He has abſolutely refuſed to marry my ſiſter, which is a denouëment I have long foreſeen, and of which I have warned Octavia. But ſhe has that foible vanity as well as myſelf."

"Upon my ſoul! I never thought it would be a match!" ſaid Harwood, Conway was much too inattentive and too indifferent for a lover."

"Well, but every thing I have been ſaying is foreign to the information I ſtill have to communicate; only that I thought it juſt to tell you exactly my couſin's preſent ſituation in our family."

"I own my curioſity is highly raiſed, and that I am as much as ever at a loſs to gueſs my part—"

"In ſhort, then—Carloville is dead!"

"And you are come purpoſely to tell me of it!" cried Harwood, jumping up, and ſhaking

Lord

Lord Caerleon violently by the hand. "I proteſt it is the moſt friendly, the moſt affectionate, the kindeſt, the moſt diſintereſted thing! You knew how it would rejoice me! If ever I have it in my power to bring you pleaſant news, I will acquit myſelf of this debt, though I traverſe all Europe!"

Here Lord Caerleon would have ſpoken; but Harwood precipitately left the room, declaring he would not detain the information from his wife one ſingle moment for the univerſe.

In the mean time Caerleon relapſed into uncertainty and irreſolution on the ſubject in queſtion. Sometimes the faint but ſtill pleaſing remembrance of Roſamond Beralſtone promoted Conway's cauſe: but at the ſame moment the form of Ethelreda would glide before his mind's eye, and effectually diſſipate every other idea.

Of this extraordinary diſcovery, the moſt extraordinary circumſtances ſtill remain untold. Indeed Caerleon, when he began to reflect on the part he had performed in this cataſtrophe, very naturally concluded that decency alone, even if no other motive intervened, would effectually prevent him from ſucceeding with Ethelreda as a lover. He therefore, after ſome moments of reflection, and after having beſtowed ſome few maledictions on his own unfortunate deſtiny for having made him the inſtrument of action in an event which nevertheleſs he could not regret, reſolved to tell every circumſtance of the affair in queſtion to Harwood; and prevail on him to conceal the principal part he had taken in it from the knowledge of Ethelreda.

When therefore Harwood returned to deſire his company in Mrs. Harwood's dreſſing-room, Lord Caerleon begged he would firſt hear a particular detail of the manner of Carloville's death;

as it would be extremely diſtreſſing to him to be aſked any queſtions on the ſubject before Mrs. Carloville.

Harwood with his uſual wildneſs declared the manner was of very little importance; promiſing however to hear the whole ſtory attentively.

Caerleon then briefly and circumſtantially related the whole from beginning to end; not even omitting that part of it which concerned Miſs Beralſtone, which undoubtedly was not neceſſary towards the underſtanding of the before-related detail; and concluded rather abruptly, by declaring he was diſtractedly in love with Mrs. Carloville.

Harwood received this latter piece of information with a very unceremonious laugh, in which Caerleon could not forbear joining; proteſting in the ſame breath, he would ſhoot himſelf if he did not ſucceed in his intended application.

Mr. Harwood now ſeriouſly aſked, if he was not joking?

"Joking! Mr. Harwood?" ſaid Lord Caerleon *as* ſeriouſly. "Is there any thing in my manner that can tempt you to think ſo?"

"Oh, perfectly the contrary!" ſaid Harwood repreſſing another laugh.

"I ſee," ſaid Caerleon, "you are diſpoſed to turn my propoſals into ridicule; but I confeſs I am at a loſs," continued he proudly, "to gueſs, Mr. Harwood, at your objections."

"You miſtake me, my lord," ſaid Harwood, ſomewhat piqued at his manner. "I am only intereſted in the *happineſs* of my ſiſter; of courſe I have none in the world, if Mrs. Carloville can overcome certain objections, at leaſt what the world in general eſteems ſuch, though faſhion may term them *prejudices*."

"I ſuppoſe

"I ſuppoſe you will not refuſe to conceal *ſome* particulars in this ſtory I have been relating?"

"If I were poſitively aſſured the ſtory would never be known to any man beſide yourſelf, my lord, I ſhould think myſelf unpardonably guilty in concealing it from the woman whom it ſo nearly concerns, as in the preſent inſtance."

"I thought you allowed me ſome claims on your gratitude, Mr. Harwood," ſaid Lord Caerleon, riſing and walking towards the door: his tone and manner both expreſſing haughtineſs and reſentment.

"Let me entreat you to hear reaſon, Lord Caerleon!" ſaid Harwood, ſtepping before him good-humouredly. "Take that chair, and let me convince you that I am perfectly right."

"Give me leave to ring for my ſervant, ſir."

"Your haſtineſs of temper has made you both unjuſt and ungenerous, my lord," ſaid Harwood in a ſevere tone, as he rang the bell.

"Your obſervation is extremely ill-timed, Sir. As I am impatient to be gone, and not to detain you further, may I beg the favour of ſome paper and a pen?"

Both were on the table, and Lord Caerleon wrote a ſhort note to Ethelreda, entreating to be allowed one half hour's converſation with her the next day. This he gave to a ſervant, and, ſtiffly bowing to Mr. Harwood, once more took the road to Strathener Caſtle, where he intended to ſleep, leaving Mr. Harwood highly incenſed at his injuſtice and tenacity.

Lord Caerleon, entirely unuſed as he was to oppoſition, could not help feeling the force of Harwood's arguments, though he leaſt expected them from him. If theſe then were Mr. Harwood's ſentiments, Caerleon ſaw but little chance

of

of Mrs. Carloville's differing in opinion. Mortified and angry with himſelf and her, provoked and diſſatisfied with Harwood, but inwardly convinced of his own injuſtice and Harwood's ſenſe of propriety, Lord Caerleon reached Strathener, where he paſſed a ſleepleſs night. Wavering and irreſolute, he aroſe much earlier than uſual, determined to do a thouſand things, but fixed on nothing: one moment waiting impatiently for an anſwer from Ethelreda, and the next reſolved to leave Strathener immediately. Not till paſt eleven did this note arrive. Lord Caerleon took it eagerly from the hands of the ſervant, expecting, in the firſt tranſports of his vanity, that half a line would amply repay him for the two hours of anxiety he had paſſed ſince his breakfaſt.

To a tranſient obſerver Lord Caerleon would really have appeared to receive all the ſatisfaction he expected from its contents, for he ſmiled twice; but the cuſtom he had given himſelf of *ſneering at every thing*, had left him but one mode of expreſſing contempt, anger, or approbation, without the aid of words. It is certain neither of theſe ſmiles implied approbation; for he had no ſooner read the note than he tore it in half, and threw both parts into the fire. Then ringing the bell violently, "Order my chaiſe *immediately*," ſaid he to the ſervant. "Prude!" ſaid Caerleon between his teeth, as he fixed his eyes on an old portrait over the chimney. "Strange!" ſaid he, as he conſidered the picture, "that I ſhould never have diſcovered the likeneſs before! A muſlin gown inſtead of flowered velvet, and it might paſs for the portrait of Roſamond Beralſtone!" Another ring to haſten the carriage brought a ſervant to ſay it waited.

"Preſent my compliments to your maſter, and tell Mr. Harwood I beg his pardon," ſaid Caerleon

leon to a ſervant in Harwood's livery, who ſtood near the carriage. Then drawing up the glaſſes, and wrapping himſelf in his eider-down péliſſe, he thought of nothing for the remainder of the journey but the delights of London.

CHAP. XV.

Get thee glaſs eyes,
And, like a ſcurvy politician, ſeem to ſee
The thing thou doſt not.

LEAR.

HOW different are the effects produced by the ſame cauſe! That very circumſtance which alone Lord Caerleon imagined ſtood in the way of his happineſs, had raiſed Conway from miſery and deſpondence to hope, and almoſt to joy. The report of Carloville's death, which was now almoſt univerſally known, had given him freſh ſpirits to withſtand not only his father's entreaties, but even his commands, ſhould Mr. Conway think proper to uſe them. But he was much too cautious and too politic to adopt ſo falſe a method. He knew that to command, was to provoke his ſon to diſobedience; and though, to uſe his own phraſe, the balance of power was in his hands, he was too well acquainted with the republican ſpirit of his ſon, not to know that harſhneſs would drive him to rebellion.

Notwithſtanding theſe prudent reſolutions, Mr. Conway dreaded being thrown off his guard by his ſon's ſteadineſs and perſeverance. He had more

more than once obſerved Conway's inclinations and his own, inſtead of coinciding as he intended they ſhould, differed widely; but he conſoled himſelf with the certainty of Ethelreda's marriage, and placed all his hopes upon that certainty. But the death of Carloville, which he would fain have doubted, filled him with perplexity and apprehenſions; and though this unexpected accident did not alter his plans, it threw ſo many obſtacles in the way of their completion, that a leſs practiſed politician would at once have abandoned them as injudicious and impracticable.

It was after a debate on the ſubject, the ſecond Mr. Conway had hazarded, that Caerleon entered his uncle's library, where he expected to find Conway alone. He ſtood with his back turned towards the door, at one of the windows: a newſpaper in his hand; Mr. Conway ſat frowning, at a table covered with papers and pens. Neither of them ſaw Caerleon till he was at his couſin's elbow.

"Where have you been?" ſaid Conway, putting the newſpaper into his pocket.

"A la bonne heure," ſaid Caerleon in a low tone, at the ſame time addreſſing his uncle, who had ſmoothed his frown into placidity and ſmiles; and who, not wiſhing to return to the ſubject he had been diſcuſſing with his ſon, in the preſence of Lord Caerleon, rather mal-à-propos aſked the ſame queſtion.

"I have been in Flanders," replied Caerleon. "But that you know already."

"In Flanders!" cried Henry Conway, with aſtoniſhment: "then you ought to know ſomething of this affair," pointing out the paragraph in the newſpaper, totally regardleſs of his father's preſence. It is doubtful whether the queſtion was moſt perplexing to Lord Caerleon, or to his uncle.

uncle. The former half determined to deny any previous knowledge of it, in order to diſguiſe the motive of his recent journey; whilſt the latter was in imminent danger of hearing all his ſon's doubts cleared up, and every impediment removed that had hitherto lain in the way of a connection with Mrs. Carloville.

Mr. Conway took two or three turns acroſs the room, whilſt Lord Caerleon, under pretence of reading what Conway had pointed out to him, deferred giving any anſwer. At length, "You had better write to Lord Beralſtone," ſaid he.—"And why to Lord Beralſtone, ſir?" aſked Mr. Conway impatiently. "Did you not return laſt night? And if you are ignorant of the misfortune that has happened to Mr. Carloville, do you imagine that he is better informed than you are? The date plainly demonſtrates that either it happened *before* you left the continent, or not at all!"

"And what then, Sir?" ſaid Caerleon, with a degree of rudeneſs he would have bluſhed at upon recollection. "Am I obliged to know every thing that paſſes in Bruſſels whilſt I am at Oſtend?"

"I believe I have ſome judgment; ſome penetration, I would ſay," ſaid Mr. Conway, fixing his eyes on Lord Caerleon; "and yet I am at a loſs to divine why your lordſhip ſhould forfeit civility, good manners I mean, without reaſon, without provocation."

"I did not intend it, ſir," ſaid Caerleon: "but you will pardon me; I think I had ſome provocation: I hate to be queſtioned. I am going, Conway," ſaid he, after bowing ſlightly to his uncle. He was at the door, when Conway called to him to come back: "I have ſomething to ſay to my father, and I wiſh *you* to hear it, Caerleon!" cried he.

We

"We treſpaſs on his lordſhip's time, Henry," ſaid Mr. Conway with affected compoſure; tho' he dreaded extremely to hear what his ſon intended ſaying.

Lord Caerleon returned however; whilſt Conway, at a loſs for words to expreſs what nevertheleſs he had determined to ſay, was ſome moments ſilent. At length, "You interrupted, or rather you prevented the recommencement of a converſation, in which, Lord Caerleon, you have ſome concern as well as myſelf; at leaſt, it is moſt probable you will take ſome intereſt in an affair which has to do with the peace of your whole family."

"I ſee, ſir," ſaid Mr. Conway, "you are determined to try how much provocation my temper will bear; but" added he ſternly, "I adviſe you not to try it to the utmoſt."

"And I, ſir," ſaid Conway, with a calmneſs and firmneſs of manner, that ſurpriſed even his father, "accuſtomed as I have ever been to contradiction, I am yet too unmanageable to be controlled in the moſt important moment of my life. I will be my own maſter in this one inſtance; for, not on any conſideration would I have it to ſay, that to you I owed the miſery of my future ſituation. I will confeſs to you, neither my duty nor my affection would prevent me from reproaching you with it inceſſantly."

"I begin to comprehend now," cried Caerleon, with an air of fatigue, to his uncle, "that all this relates to Lady Octavia."

"Pſhaw!" cried Mr. Conway, in a tone that implied anger and vexation.

"And I wiſh you to tell my Lord Trecaſtle," continued Conway, without noticing either, "that no engagement has been made between Lady

Lady Octavia and me, and only conditionally, as I apprehend, between himſelf and my father."

"That's falſe!" cried Mr. Conway, entirely thrown off his guard by the conſtruction his ſon had put upon his proceedings. "You muſt know, ſir, that my honour and my word are too far engaged to Lord Trecaſtle for me to think of receding; and though the treaty of alliance was ſet on foot,"—conſiderably raiſing his tone,—"without your having been previouſly conſulted, as I never doubted of your fulfilling the compact, ſo I made no clauſe in the agreement, whereby you may refuſe to keep your faith. And ſhall I quietly ſuffer ſolemn articles to be infringed upon, to be broken, I would ſay, and permit my name to be held up in Europe as an example of the inefficacy of treaties?" Caerleon actually laughed during this pompous harangue, but he took care it ſhould be à la derobée.

"You cannot reproach me with duplicity," ſaid Conway; "neither can Lady Octavia. I have taken this opportunity of diſcloſing my determinations to Lord Caerleon, to yourſelf, ſir, for the ſecond time, and to my uncle, either thro' you or my couſin."

Mr. Conway, too much provoked by this laſt reference to himſelf, for ſome moments was utterly incapable of anſwering; his countenance plainly evinced the exceſs of paſſion that agitated him. At length, in a tone of thunder, he exclaimed, "'Tis very well, ſir: I know your determination; I ſhall take ſome opportunity of letting you know mine, when that gentleman is not preſent; and I adviſe you to recollect, when my determinations are made, they are not ſo eaſily broken as yours perhaps."

Conway changed countenance whilſt his father was ſpeaking, more alarmed at his manner and appearance,

appearance, than at any punishment implied to himself. "Nay, do not put yourself in a passion, Harry," said his father, observing him, in a mild tone, as if determined to transfer all the rage into which he had been betrayed, from himself to his son.

"It appears to me," said Caerleon, with a sneer, "that we have all changed characters. Conway has transferred his turbulence to you," addressing his uncle, "in exchange for prudence and politeness: I myself have been deficient enough in the latter article; but still it must be acknowledged you are more consummately versed in the affairs of Europe; and he is deeper in the secrets of the house of Conway."

"Pray don't provoke my father," cried Conway, observing the effect of this sally.

"It is not in the power of either the one or the other," said Mr. Conway, as he walked towards the door, whither he was followed by his son who repeatedly attempted to speak to him, but was prevented by the determined manner in which he motioned him with his hand to desist; for Mr. Conway dared not trust his voice, lest he should bring upon himself the insupportable sneers of his most ungracious nephew.

Lord Caerleon seldom behaved with incivility to any one: but to his uncle he thought himself authorised, or at least excused, in his rudeness, because Mr. Conway sometimes convicted him of telling lies of Italy, and sometimes exposed his political errors to Lord Trecastle, either of which Caerleon could have forgiven; but Mr. Conway's watchful avarice could ill endure to see the large sums squandered away in trifles which Lord Caerleon openly expended. He therefore prevailed on Lord Trecastle to retrench his nephew's income, and himself admonished him to be more frugal.

frugal. His efforts, though ineffectual, were not eaſily forgiven by Caerleon, notwithſtanding the latter could at any time procure what ſums he choſe from his father, after half an hour's converſation with him on his favourite topic—the ſtate of the nation.

CHAP. XVI.

How eaſy is it for the proper falſe
In women's waxen hearts to ſet their forms!
Alas! our frailty is the cauſe, not we;
For ſuch as we are made, e'en ſuch we be.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

THE Beralſtons were now returned from the Continent, and with them Lord Caerleon almoſt entirely ſpent his time. Miſs Beralſton had regained her influence over him; and too much pleaſed and flattered by the conqueſt of ſo very faſhionable a man as Lord Caerleon, ſhe overlooked, or never perceived his numerous faults; and whilſt ſhe exerciſed all the tyranny and caprice of a beauty on a crowd of admirers, ſhe treated him with a marked and flattering diſtinction; unconſcious that Ethelreda, by a ſingle ſmile, could at any time appropriate to herſelf this lover of ſo much conſequence in her eyes. But, as yet, ſhe had ſeen no inſtances of Caerleon's whimſical and inconſtant diſpoſition. His reaſons for quitting Bruſſels ſo ſuddenly were unknown to her; that is to ſay, he had ſo well diſguiſed the real ones, that Miſs Beralſton had nothing

nothing to complain of; and in London, where a thouſand admirers offered incenſe, Lord Caerleon was proud of being the favoured votary.

Poor Conway could gain but little information on the ſubject of Carloville's death from Lord Beralſton, who had heard not much more in Bruſſels than he had gained from the London papers. The Comte de Clerac-Auxerre, who accompanied him to England, could not throw more light on the ſubject. On the contrary, his opinion ſeemed to involve it in more obſcurity: he inſiſted it could be no other than Colonel de Winterfeldt, who had been miſſing ſince the night mentioned as that when the body of Carloville was diſcovered; the circumſtance of the German uniform operating to confirm him in his opinion, whilſt he entirely overlooked the notes as very accidental and vague evidence.

This myſtery Lord Caerleon alone could clear up, as he alone knew that Captain Carloville and Colonel de Winterfeldt were the ſame. Conway, whoſe anxiety made him dread the truth of the report, ſuffered a thouſand fears and ſurpriſes to prey upon his mind. He grew dull and melancholy, and his mother, who, for one week, was ſurpriſed at his cheerfulneſs and vivacity, dreaded more than ever his returning deſpondency. As for Mr. Conway, he was neither vexed nor alarmed at it, but conſtrued every ſymptom of vexation in favour of his own views and deſigns.

When he left his ſon and nephew, ſo highly incenſed againſt each, he was almoſt equally angry with himſelf, and inwardly determined never to mention the ſubject again, at leaſt till his own ſchemes were fixed beyond the power of Conway to overturn them. His countenance he could command better than his temper; he had, however, ſo far ſubdued the latter, as to appear in his

his own family with perfect compoſure, and ſo far impoſed on Conway, that he ſeverely blamed his own want of temper; and fondly imagining he had conquered his father's prejudices, he more than once determined to conſult him, as in developing myſteries he thought more highly of his father's penetration than of any other man's whatever.

Yet through all Mr. Conway's calmneſs and affected ſerenity, a ſcrutiniſing eye might have perceived his mind was occupied when he appeared moſt diſengaged. An accumulation of apprehenſions, notwithſtanding his diſſimulation, were often viſibly pourtrayed upon his countenance; amongſt which not the leaſt alarming was the extreme delight Lady Octavia appeared to take in the attentions of the young Count de Clerac, who ſpared no pains to captivate her, drawling, inſipid, and ſentimental as ſhe was. To his nephew he literally *dared* not to ſpeak, as their converſations uſually ended in contentions; and the ſlighteſt provocation would have reminded him of Conway's meſſage to Lord Trecaſtle, who, he knew, would at once put an end to his hopes of a matrimonial connection, when he perceived his ſon's reluctance to it. To Conway he remained ſilent for the ſame reaſons. He knew Caerleon would never remember to relate a ſyllable of what had paſſed to his father, unleſs repeatedly reminded of it; and that Conway would rely upon Caerleon he as poſitively concluded, or at leaſt was willing to hope. There remained then no courſe for Mr. Conway, but to warn his brother of the Count's attentions and inſinuating manners, and to reiterate in his ear that he was a *foreigner*.

If Conway was impoſed on by the aſſumed indifference of his father, he was not more at eaſe

with

with him: he was ſtill ſuſpicious of ſomething he knew not what; nor did he proceed without great caution in his enquiries concerning Carloville.

He ſaw but little of Beralſton, and ſtill leſs of Caerleon. Indeed he had ſo often tormented both with perpetually queſtioning them on the ſame ſubject, that Caerleon was frequently on the point of telling the whole ſecret, in order to get rid of his importunities; but a lurking preference ſtill prevented him from giving his rival ſo manifeſt an advantage; and it was not till he had made propoſals in form to Roſamond Beralſton, that he could come to the reſolution of adviſing Conway to write to or ſee Mr. Harwood. The advice itſelf was nearly as perplexing as the uncertainty. Conway was too much in love not to dread offending Ethelreda or her family. He could find no plauſible pretext for writing to Harwood; it was ſtill more difficult to eſcape his father's vigilance. Thus paſſed week after week in forming fruitleſs ſchemes, which were never attempted to be put in execution.

It is doubtful whether Ethelreda was more at eaſe in her new character than ſhe had been in her former one. It is true ſhe no more apprehended the return of Carloville. Conway too had refuſed to marry his couſin, as ſhe had learned from Mr. Harwood: but Conway might have forgotten her; he might have releaſed himſelf from old engagements only to form new ones, in which ſhe had no ſhare; he might never have recollected that Carloville had left a widow. Yet in ſpite of theſe tormenting reflections, and ſlowly as time ſeemed to linger, January was gone, February and March paſſed away. It was April; and in May, if the ſitting of Parliament did not interfere, the Strathener family al-

ways returned. But Ethelreda's thoughts were not entirely taken up with her own concerns. Mrs. Harwood recovered but ſlowly; her health naturally delicate required care and attention; her ſpirits too ſeemed to give way. Ethelreda, who ſometimes reproached herſelf with adding to her ſiſter's anxieties, made ſo many efforts to appear cheerful, that in ſome meaſure ſhe ſucceeded ſo as to regain her former temper, at leaſt in appearance. She herſelf was often ſurpriſed at it: yet whenever this idea occurred to her, involuntarily ſhe looked at her mourning.

Mrs. Harwood's walks were chiefly confined to the Caſtle gardens; her ſiſter uſually accompanied her, Mr. Harwood always. Ethelreda then had but few opportunities of viſiting her favourite watch-tower; for when her ſiſter's ſhort walk was ended, ſhe generally returned with her to the Caſtle for the remainder of the day.

Ethelreda ſometimes roſe early, and employed herſelf before breakfaſt with muſic; but one fine morning, tempted by the beautiful verdure of the park, which ſhe ſaw from her window, ſhe put on her hat, and ſtrolled towards the watch-tower. None but the ſervants of the Caſtle were ſtirring; ſhe therefore reſolved to indulge herſelf with ſolitude till the bell warned her to return. It was not with her uſual intention of looking towards Strathener, that Ethelreda climbed the higheſt part of the park; ſhe even left the tower on her left hand, and never lifted her eyes from the ground till ſhe reached the ſkirts of the wood that crowned the eminence. Here, more from cuſtom than intentionally, ſhe ſtopped and looked towards Strathener. The ſun ſhone brightly upon the walls of the Caſtle. Ethelreda looked ſteadfaſtly: ſhe thought her eyes deceived her; ſhe looked again, and was convinced

convinced she beheld the flag wavering over the eastern turret—the signal that Lord Trecastle and his family were arrived.

"When did they come?" said Ethelreda aloud: "What day is this?" taking out her pocket-book. It was the first of May. "I must then have passed the may-pole without observing it," continued she, "as I came through the Castle gates! my poor pensioners will expect me in the village;" still fixing her eyes on the flag; when a rustling among the leaves of the underwood made her turn round. But she saw nothing, and, concluding it must have been the browsing of the deer, she presently resumed her former attitude. Her hand drawn across her eyes prevented her from seeing Lord Caerleon, who passed at that moment; whilst the same circumstance prevented him from knowing Mrs. Carloville. He walked on some paces, when the sound of more feet made her think of returning; and Caerleon, who still kept his eyes fixed upon her, returned precipitately. "Mrs. Carloville! I am certain," cried he. "You are soon returned, my lord," said Ethelreda, perceiving it was Caerleon, and thinking at the same moment of the errand that brought him last to St. Siffrid's.

"I have thought it an age," replied he, sighing, and attempting to take her hand.

"Nay!" said she without noticing his manner, "time passes with me slowly enough, yet I am certain it is but little more than three months since you were left at St. Siffrid's." At that very instant, and almost whilst she was speaking, Ethelreda perceived Conway walking at her side; he had just overtaken them as they descended the hill. He hesitated, trembled, looked angry, and doubtful whether he should join

them or paſs on. Ethelreda too was alarmed: ſhe ſtarted when ſhe ſaw him, and was ſo much confuſed ſhe could ſcarcely aſk for Mrs. Conway. "My mother is tolerably well, madam," ſaid Conway. He then aſked after her own health and that of Mrs. Harwood, and then was ſilent, apparently debating with himſelf whether he ſhould take leave, or accompany them to the Caſtle. Lord Caerleon too was ſilent. As for Ethelreda, ſhe never doubted but Conway had overheard them; and too much aſhamed to ſpeak, and dreading the conſtruction Conway might throw on her meeting with Caerleon ſo immediately on his arrival, ſhe quickened her pace in hopes they would perceive ſhe meant to leave them both: but Caerleon ſeemed to have very different intentions; he ſtill kept cloſe to her elbow: and Conway, who was ſome paces behind, would ſoon have loſt ſight of them at the pace they walked, had not Ethelreda ſuddenly ſlipped. Conway ſprung forward in an inſtant, and prevented her from falling; he ſilently offered his arm. At the ſame moment Lord Caerleon, without appearing to ſee that Conway had offered his, ſaid, "Mrs. Carloville, do take my arm; you walk ſo extremely faſt, I am not ſurpriſed you were in danger of falling."

"I always walk faſt, and uſually *alone*," ſaid Ethelreda, vexed at the familiarity of his manner. Conway darted an angry look at his couſin, and, perceiving ſhe was inclined to accept his aid, drew her arm under his and walked on without ſpeaking. The embarraſſment of Ethelreda's manner did not eſcape Conway's eye. He was puzzled at her holding by him, ſince it effectually prevented him from taking his departure as he intended; and whilſt he made reflections

tions not much to the credit of his couſin's conſtancy, expecting every moment that Caerleon would leave them, they reached the Caſtle gates, where a crowd of villagers waited the arrival of their beloved benefactreſs. But Ethelreda, who was without oſtentation in her charities, gently waving her hand to her penſioners, paſſed through with her eſcort to the breakfaſt-room.

Mrs. Harwood had not yet made her appearance, and both gentlemen ſeemed bent on waiting till the other had taken his leave; when Mr. Harwood entered the room, and entreated both to ſtay. Lord Caerleon excuſed himſelf: but, to his utter aſtoniſhment, Conway, inſtead of following his example, accepted Mr. Harwood's invitation, and took his place accordingly next to Mrs. Carloville, waiting Mrs. Harwood's entrance.

The breakfaſt was not a very ſprightly one; Ethelreda was embarraſſed, Conway was abſent and thoughtful. Mrs. Harwood complained of a pain in her ſide, and ſoon after left the room with her ſiſter; and Conway propoſed a walk to Harwood, in hopes of finding ſome opportunity of ſpeaking of Mrs. Carloville; or, rather, he was in hopes Harwood himſelf would begin the ſubject.

But he was diſappointed. At length, after a long ſilence, as they turned into the ſame wood from whence he and his couſin had both iſſued in the morning, and which joined the domains of Strathener and St. Siffrid's, "You are not ſtill in uncertainty as to Mr. Carloville's death?" ſaid Conway. "I perceive Mrs. Carloville is in mourning."

"We have never doubted of the fact one moment," ſaid Harwood. "You in all probability, have

have had the ſame information from Lord Caerleon: is it poſſible you can admit a doubt?"

"All the intelligence I could procure, I muſt confeſs, amounts to ſo little, that, notwithſtanding the inclination I have to believe it true, I not only doubt, but am nearly convinced, the whole of the report is a falſe one," ſaid Conway deſpondingly.

"Let me underſtand you!" cried Harwood, with impatience and with fear in his aſpect. "From whom did you hear the ſtory?"

"From Caerleon and Count de Clerac."

"Yet you are unconvinced of the truth?"

"Let me underſtand *you*," ſaid Conway earneſtly, "and do not think me impertinent, but highly intereſted in the queſtions I am about to aſk—Yet, knowing as I do his poſitive engagement, it is almoſt a needleſs queſtion—Does Lord Caerleon pay any particular attentions to Mrs. Carloville? and does ſhe approve of them?"

"Excuſe me, Captain Conway," ſaid Harwood gravely, "but I think the latter a very unneceſſary queſtion, and injurious to the delicacy of Mrs. Carloville. You cannot imagine ſhe would approve of the man who has been inſtrumental in the death of her huſband? There is ſomething ſhocking in the idea, though Carloville deſerved nothing better of her."

"Stop one moment!" cried Conway. "Did you ſay Caerleon was inſtrumental in the death of Carloville? Then he undoubtedly wiſhed to conceal the circumſtances of his death from me, as, notwithſtanding a thouſand interrogatories, I could not prevail on him to grant me more information than the newſpapers afforded.—He certainly ſuſpected my intentions," continued Conway, "and yet it is impoſſible our preſent views can ever interfere."

"And

"And pray," cried Harwood laughing, "what may *be* your intentions, your preſent views, Captain Conway? If *I* can be of any ſervice to you," continued he gaily, "command me."

"Dear Harwood!" cried Conway, with hope and pleaſure in his countenance, "give me your friendſhip—your intereſt would be uſeleſs; ſince I am perſuaded Mrs. Carloville will be guided by her heart alone."

"Mrs. Carloville!" cried Harwood, with counterfeit aſtoniſhment. "Oh, if you have any thing to ſay to Mrs. Carloville, ſhe is a lady with whom I never interfere. Beſides, I ſuppoſe it will be hereſy in future to believe her capable of error!—Is not that the tone, Conway?"

"This *perſifflage* comes with a bad grace from a married man, Harwood! but don't ſpare your wit, I am in admirable temper for bearing it."

"Better than your couſin, perhaps?"

"I mean to try him at dinner." Here they parted; Conway was under the neceſſity of joining the Strathener family, where his gaiety and ſprightlineſs vexed his father, delighted his uncle, aſtoniſhed every body, and nearly ſtole from Lord Caerleon the heart of his intended bride; whilſt the Count de Clerac, unable to account for the phenomenon, exclaimed inceſſantly, "Parbleu! c'eſt une metamorphoſe!"

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Mark thoſe diſgraceful piles of wood and ſtone,
Thoſe parks and gardens, where, his haunts betrim'd,
And nature by preſumptuous art oppreſs'd,
The woodland Genius mourns!

LIBERTY.

NOT a day paſſed in which Conway did not avail himſelf of his intimacy with Harwood to viſit at the Caſtle. In all theſe viſits he ſaw Ethelreda, and ſaw her ſtill more engaging and lovely than ever.

Miſs Beralſton, happy in the opportunity of renewing the acquaintance of her childhood with Sibilla and Ethelreda, was continually promoting parties either at St. Siffrid's, or at Strathener Caſtle, whilſt ſhe was yet unconſcious that Lord Caerleon was only devoted to her in the abſence of Ethelreda.

Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Lady Mariamne, who had lately taken poſſeſſion of their houſe at Kilgaren, gave variety to the circle. And though Sir Francis's peculiarities were ſometimes tireſome, they as often were diverting. He had ſcarcely been three days at Kilgaren, before he was ſurrounded by artificers of all kinds; from Rome he had got an architect, and maker of fountains; and to Cornwall he had ſent for miners, as he was determined to undermine his premiſes, in order to imitate the grotto of Poſilipo.

He had already cut a fine old grove of evergreens into what he called a teatro di verdura; that is to ſay, he had cropped them into colonnades

nades and appartments, in imitation of ſome of the villas about Rome. It is true Lady Mariamne was ſome interruption to his plans; for ſhe found fault with every thing, abuſed the houſe, and declared if he perſiſted in making the grotto of Poſilipo, ſhe would return to London, and leave him to purſue his improvements alone. But when Sir Francis was determined, her ladyſhip's threats were ineffectual; he therefore ſilently ſet his miners to work, determined to convert the ſide of the hill into a grotto, in ſpite of her apprehenſions.

If Ethelreda was at eaſe with regard to Conway, her own happineſs did not make her ſelfiſh, or regardleſs of the ſufferings of others. She perceived with extreme ſorrow, that Lord Caerleon's conduct with reſpect to her was highly reprehenſible, ſince his attentions and aſſiduities were equally or indeed more directed to her than to Miſs Beralſton; who at length diſcovered his inconſtancy, and, in the bitterneſs of her vexation, tacitly blamed Mrs. Carloville—though ſhe ſaw her perfectly unintereſted in Lord Caerleon or his proceedings, any further than as they related to Miſs Beralſton herſelf.

Ethelreda, from her manner, perceived the injuſtice ſhe did her: but, free from reſentment, ſhe pitied and lamented the cauſe, and heartily forgave her undeſerved coldneſs, becauſe ſhe ſaw it was almoſt impoſſible for her to reſtrain her diſcontent and anger from Lord Caerleon himſelf, and that her behaviour towards him was a continual ſtruggle between mortified pride and unbounded partiality.

If ſhe was vexed and diſguſted at Caerleon's unprincipled inconſtancy, ſhe was exaſperated at the Count de Clerac, who was become ten times more troubleſome than ever Lord Caerleon had been

been. She was incenſed againſt him, becauſe ſhe perceived all his perſecuting flattery was intended to raiſe the jealouſy of Lady Octavia, and ſtrengthen the preference he was certain ſhe had for him; a mode of proceeding which ſhe knew would effectually procure her the hatred and ill will of the above-mentioned lady, which ſhe dreaded extremely, circumſtanced as ſhe was at preſent with her family. For though as yet nothing like propoſals had been made by Henry Conway to Mrs. Carloville; yet every time ſhe ſaw his father, ſhe was more and more convinced he had other views for his ſon's eſtabliſhment than Conway himſelf had formed; and proud of her deſcent, and conſcious of her ſuperiority to Lady Octavia in every other reſpect, fortune alone excepted, Ethelreda was a thouſand times on the point of putting an end to Conway's addreſſes whilſt his family continued to diſapprove of them. But her attachment and preference were ſtronger than her reſolution, or even than the principles of ſelf-conſequence in which ſhe had been educated. The fervency of his paſſion, joined to his irreſiſtible manners, had procured him ſo ſtrong an aſcendency over the mind and will of Ethelreda, that he had only to entreat with humility, to deſtroy every reſolution which ſhe inceſſantly made never to ſee him again.

Mrs. Conway was indeed her warm friend, and neglected no occaſion of ſeeing her, either at Mr. Harwood's or at Lord Trecaſtle's.

At Strathener, when Lord Caerleon ruled abſolutely, and iſſued all invitations, theſe interviews were frequent; but Mrs. Conway now ſeldom viſited at St. Siffrid's, becauſe Mr. Conway had hinted to her he never would conſent to his ſon's forming ſuch a connection.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Agli amanti infelici
Son ſecoli i momenti; e ſono iſtanti
I lunghi giorni ai fortunati amanti.
METASTASIO.

DECEIVED for a moment, Ethelreda believed the adverſe tide of her fate had turned; but ſhe was ſtill many degrees from happineſs, or even eaſe. Her ſiſter's health did not mend, and Mr. Harwood's anxiety threw a gloom over his lively temper, whilſt Mrs. Carloville dreaded that every ſymptom was conſumptive. A phyſician had been ſent for from London, who immediately recommended change of air. Mr. Harwood eagerly prepared to follow his advice, with the moſt ſanguine hopes of ſucceſs; he therefore propoſed a journey into Weſtmoreland, to Harwood-hall; intending to be as long in performing it as ſhould ſuit the ſtrength and inclination of Mrs. Harwood. The impoſſibility of taking their youngeſt child was at firſt ſome objection to the intended journey; but Ethelreda willingly propoſed to take charge of them all, determining to remain at the Caſtle till they ſhould appoint her to meet them in London for the winter.

The plan thus arranged, they were not long in making preparations for the journey. The day was fixed for the firſt week in Auguſt.

Ethelreda ſaw it approach not without anxiety; ſhe dreaded being left to herſelf, her own thoughts were unpleaſant, and ſhe had reſolutely determined to give up all company, Conway himſelf not excepted,

excepted, at leaſt till her ſiſter's return; when ſhe hoped, in ſpite of her pride, which almoſt forbade her to think on ſo mortifying a ſubject, that the impediments that now prevented their union might be removed by Conway's perſeverance; and that Mr. Conway's unreaſonable objections would give way to the fixed inclinations of his ſon.

Ethelreda had reſolved to accompany Mrs. Harwood the firſt ſtage of her journey, which was to be a ſhort one, and return on horſeback, as Mr. Harwood had given up his place in the chaiſe to her. The morning was a very charming one; Mrs. Harwood's ſpirits were much better than uſual, and, ſatisfied of the care and attention her ſiſter would beſtow on the children in her abſence, ſhe took leave of them with cheerfulneſs, and performed the firſt ſtage of her journey without much fatigue. After a thouſand charges from Mrs. Harwood, and as many promiſes from Ethelreda, the two ſiſters parted; with tears each entreated the other to ſuffer no anxiety to impair her health. Ethelreda, who had partly reſtrained her ſorrow in her ſiſter's preſence, had no ſooner taken the road to St. Siffrid's than ſhe gave way to her tears. She thought of her alarming illneſs; of her own ſituation, which ſhe ſtill conſidered as dependent; and ſometimes of Conway, whom ſhe blamed for his aſſiduities, ſituated as ſhe was with his father; and once more made a mental promiſe to give him up for ever; when, about three miles from Strathener, he overtook her as if by accident—though he had learned at the Caſtle in the morning what road ſhe had taken, and that ſhe meant to return on horſeback.

Ethelreda was certainly pleaſed at this meeting with Conway, ſince ſhe could now tell him her fixed

fixed and irrevocable determinations. But ſtill the hard ſentence died upon her lips, and ſhe ſuffered every trivial queſtion which he aſked to drive her from her purpoſe—when ſhe came within ſight of the Caſtle. It was now ſhe ſummoned all her fortitude: "I am at length determined, Captain Conway—" and then ſhe heſitated, as if ſhe expected him to know what ſhe had determined. Conway had heard the ſentence too often repeated not to gueſs to what it tended; but he was reſolved not to underſtand her. "And I too," ſaid he gaily, "am determined to drink tea with you this evening."

"That is preciſely what I mean to object to," ſaid Ethelreda. "I have loſt my ſiſter," continued ſhe, "and I am poſitively reſolved to admit none but *formal* viſitors."

"And I am then to be admitted on no other terms?" ſaid Conway in a ſuplicating tone.

"Beſides," ſaid Ethelreda, "weak and unſteady as I am, I at laſt perceive the abſolute neceſſity of *never* admitting you on any other terms; and though it may be a ſacrifice (I will not deny that it is), I have at laſt the ſtrength of mind to make a painful one to my own dignity; and I entreat you will not render it more painful to me by unavailing oppoſition."

Conway was too much ſhocked, too much aſtoniſhed, to make any anſwer: nor did he perceive they had paſſed through the gateway, till he ſaw Ethelreda diſmount from her horſe without any aſſiſtance. He followed her haſtily into the Caſtle, leſt ſhe ſhould repeat her prohibition.

He looked anxiouſly at her, as he placed her chair at the tea-table, and was pleaſed to diſcover, by the agitation of her countenance, that he might yet ward off the blow with which he was threatened. He did not give her time to reſume the ſubject

ſubject herſelf, but ſaid mournfully, whilſt he held her hand, which ſhe did not attempt to withdraw, "You talk of making a ſacrifice, Mrs. Carloville, and you think to impoſe on me by words: but if you wiſh to diſmiſs me, tell me ſo. I can more patiently bear to hear you ſay you wiſh never to ſee me again, than that you ſhould attempt to impoſe on me by ſubterfuges."

"If you think me capable of them," ſaid Ethelreda, withdrawing her hand, "you had better concur with me in our ſeparation. I thought once my peace of mind was dear to you, and that, when I had told you how it was to be inſured to me, you would not have aggravated my diſtreſſes by your reproaches or your ſuſpicions."

"I never reproached you," cried Conway paſſionately; "but can I bear to hear you make reſolutions which are for ever to deſtroy my happineſs, without one effort? Oh!" continued he earneſtly, "do not ſacrifice to pride: it is a phantom created for our deſtruction. If your mind, elevated and liberal as I have always found it, is not ſuperior to every prejudice, what have I left to hope?"

"Believe me," ſaid Ethelreda calmly, "I am not ſo averſe to my own happineſs as to deſtroy yours. Is not that an acknowlegment that our intereſts are connected?" ſaid ſhe, with a penſive ſmile. "My notions of propriety I cannot give up entirely, though I will compromiſe with you: whilſt I am anxious about myſelf, I cannot be unmindful of you!"

This ſentence reaſſured the alarmed ſpirits of Conway; and though ſhe perſiſted in her firſt reſolution of ſeeing none but formal viſitors, in which he was obliged to acquieſce, he took his leave not perfectly diſſatisfied, and hoping every thing from the ſoftneſs of Ethelreda's temper.

After

After Ethelreda had communicated her determinations to Conway, ſhe felt her mind relieved from a weight of anxiety. She was ſatisfied with herſelf; and her own approbation, which for ſome time had been wanting, partly reſtored her repoſe, and made her look forward unembarraſſed by ſelf-reproach to days of happineſs and content.

When Ethelreda forbade Conway's viſits, ſhe did not mean to ſequeſter herſelf from all company; on the contrary, it was her intention to receive all her ſiſter's morning viſitors, but to engage in no parties, nor to make any at the Caſtle. Neither did ſhe intend to refuſe admittance to Conway occaſionally: relying on the knowlege ſhe had of his deference for her will, ſhe feared not he would attempt coming alone without her permiſſion. She therefore gave no particular orders; and every thing went on at the Caſtle as uſual, with this only difference, Conway's mornings were paſſed on the beach or in the wood.

Yet Ethelreda was far from reconciled to the arrangement ſhe had made; that ſolitude once ſo courted, from diſuſe was become irkſome and fatiguing. It is true, the children amuſed her part of the day, but it was an amuſement that could not ſupply the loſs of every other; ſhe had a thouſand reſources within herſelf, but to theſe ſhe could not fly for refuge, becauſe each brought with it ſome painful recollection. Four days had been paſſed in indolence and laſſitude; it was too unlike Ethelreda to continue: on the fifth morning ſhe roſe with a determined reſolution to be employed. She therefore placed her eaſel, her palette, and colours, and ſearched amongſt her unfiniſhed pictures for one that could ſufficiently intereſt her to finiſh it. She looked them all over, ſhe remembered that Conway had praiſed them

them all, and ſhe thought another touch would ſpoil them. At laſt ſhe found the drawing of the Coloſſeum. The marks of Lord Caerleon's pencil were ſtill upon the paper; it had never been touched ſince he corrected it. But ſhe had heard Conway ſpeak of ſome views of it he had ſeen at Turin: ſhe indignantly rubbed out the traces of Caerleon's pencil, and once more ardently reſumed her favourite occupation. The ſtate of the picture was advanced beyond the firſt colouring; and Ethelreda, delighted with the progreſs ſhe had made, was loſt in the contemplation of her own works, till the ſound of men's voices in the hall bid her expect company. She thought only of Conway; when the Count de Clerac gaily entered. "Que vous êtes rempli de talens!" cried he, looking at the picture, which he removed from the eaſel, at the ſame time begging her to continue. At the ſame moment Lord Caerleon and Sir Francis L'Eſterling followed: both advanced to the picture: "The *chiar' oſcuro* is charming, charming!" cried Sir Francis, applying to Lord Caerleon. Ethelreda at that moment looked at him, and thought he bluſhed.

"Your colouring is not *quite* purple enough, Mrs. Carloville. What think *you*, my lord?"

"I am but an indifferent judge," ſaid Caerleon with affected indifference, "and, be it as it will, I always admire the works of *dilettanti* artiſts."

"Nor I!" cried Sir Francis careleſsly, endeavouring to adopt the undecided manner of his model; "I confeſs I know nothing, I cannot even ſpeak of painting *artiſtement*."

"What do you think of the figures, Sir Francis?" ſaid Ethelreda; "have they a Roman air? And the cattle, are they like the cattle of the Campagna?"

"The

"The figures? I think them admirable! The coſtume is admirable. And the cattle; you have certainly bought them in the Campo Vaccino—or copied them from that beautiful picture in the palazza—in the palazza—Do you recollect thoſe cows, my lord? They were white—like theſe," ſhewing the picture.

"Or thoſe in the park," ſaid Caerleon turning to the window, who wiſhed any other ſubject had occupied the pencil of Mrs. Carloville than that which muſt unavoidably bring to her memory circumſtances much to his diſadvantage.

"Comment donc? Vous plaiſantez!" ſaid De Clerac, addreſſing Sir Francis: "It is preciſely the ſame when you ſpeak of muſic: 'Staccato, Creſcendo,' à chaque mot, et puis 'I do not underſtand the terms:' cependant c'eſt qu'on appelle partout artiſtement parler."

Lord Caerleon and Ethelreda both laughed; and Sir Francis was proceeding to explain that it was by mere accident he applied theſe words, which were abſolutely natural to him, when a ſignal of impatience from Lord Caerleon and his wiſhing Mrs. Carloville a good day obliged Sir Francis to poſtpone his explanation to ſome other opportunity, leaving De Clerac, who did not chooſe to take his departure with them, to torment and interrupt Ethelreda, as he generally did by his trifling converſation whenever accident left him alone with her.

Whilſt Ethelreda purſued her occupation, De Clerac placed a chair almoſt behind hers, and talked inceſſantly on numberleſs trifling topics, perfectly well ſatisfied with having all the converſation. Nor did he perceive that Mrs. Carloville's part of it conſiſted in now and then a monoſyllable; when a note was brought to her by a ſervant, which ſhe opened and read. It contained but

two

two lines from Conway, requeſting permiſſion to ſee her alone in the courſe of the morning. She found upon enquiry that no one waited for an anſwer: it was not poſſible then to ſend a denial, nor did ſhe intend it; but the requeſt embarraſſed her, becauſe ſhe could deviſe no means of getting rid of the Count. He ſaw by her air that ſhe was uneaſy, and attributed the changes in her countenance to what ſhe had been reading.—— "Qu'avez vous donc?" ſaid he, in a tone ſo familiar that an indifferent perſon would have concluded he had a right to enquire.

"Sir!" ſaid Ethelreda with an expreſſion of ſurpriſe that diſconcerted him.

"Vous vous troublez," ſaid he. "I feared bad news from Madame Harwood."

"No," ſaid Ethelreda. "But I hope you will excuſe me; I expect ſome one ſoon on buſineſs."

"Certainément. Je partirai:" But he kept his ſeat notwithſtanding, and ſtill thought only of amuſing himſelf. "What beautiful hair you have!" twiſting a curl round his fingers, "quelle charmante chevelure, et d'un longueur qui ne finit point!"

Before Ethelreda could anſwer, or even ſpeak, the door opened gently, and Conway advanced ſome paces into the room. He ſtopped an inſtant, looked earneſtly at the Count, and at Mrs. Carloville with an expreſſion ſhe could not miſtake: he bowed; but not daring to truſt himſelf with words, he bowed again and left them.

Ethelreda in thoſe two or three moments ſuffered more confuſion than words can deſcribe; her countenance exhibited every mark of diſtreſs, ſhe dropped her palette and her pencils, but could not articulate a word. She ſaw that Conway obſerved her agitation, and when he left the room ſhe

was convinced it appeared to him his intruſion had cauſed her embarraſſment. She recollected how often ſhe had amuſed herſelf by tormenting Conway with the Count's praiſes, and now ſhe thought he was gone for ever! What would he think of her? Alone with De Clerac, when he had been forbidden! The terrible idea made her almoſt frantic: ſhe roſe and walked the room, regardleſs of De Clerac, who, pretending not to obſerve her, was handling and examining every thing upon the table by way of taking from the awkwardneſs of his own ſituation, which, notwithſtanding his obtruſive manners, he every obviouſly felt. In the box of colours were two waving locks of Ethelreda's hair: one of them was intended for her ſiſter, the other perhaps for Conway.

"Give me this:" ſaid De Clerac, holding the lock of hair in his hand.

"Not for the univerſe!" cried Ethelreda vehemently, and taking it from him. "It is already given to my ſiſter," continued ſhe, endeavouring to reſtrain her emotion.

"But you have another!" ſaid De Clerac, taking it, as if determined not to be refuſed.

"I *cannot* give it you!" ſaid Ethelreda angrily; "what right have you to aſk it?"

"The very beſt in the world!" cried he gaily, "if it pleaſe me, ſi cela fera mon bonheur;" and he took out his pocket-book, intending to depoſit the ſpoils in it.

"I inſiſt upon your returning it this moment, Monſieur le Comte"——ſaid Ethelreda in a commanding tone.

"Ha, ha! vous plaiſantez! Cela n'eſt pas vraiſemblable."

"I muſt tell you, Sir, you are not only deficient in the politeneſs of your nation, but in the manners

manners of a gentleman; and if you do not immediately do as I command, I muſt think of ſome other mode of obliging you to comply!"—De Clerac's countenance changed two or three times from red to pale: he was evidently very angry, very much mortified, and ſtill more diſappointed. His vanity was unbounded, and nothing was farther from his thoughts than ſuch a refuſal; as he had already ſettled in what way he ſhould diſcover or rather exhibit his trophy to Octavia. He therefore ſilently placed the intended prize upon the table, and, with five or ſix bows and a half ſmile, took his leave, ſaying to himſelf as he departed, "Mais elle eſt d'une fierté!"

Mrs. Carloville felt a little relieved when ſhe ſaw him depart; ſhe flattered herſelf he might overtake Conway before he reached Strathener. But of what avail would that be? Conway's jealous and impetuous temper was very well known to her; he had perhaps received impreſſions that not all her proteſtations could efface; or, more probably, he never meant to give her an opportunity of making any. Sinking with fear and vexation, and overcome with apprehenſions, ſometimes ſhe hoped Conway and the Count would not meet; ſince every thing was to be dreaded from Conway's paſſion, and the inſolent and exulting vanity of De Clerac. For a moment the purport of Conway's viſit ruſhed upon her mind; ſhe thought he *might* have brought the tidings of his father's compliance, and in the bitterneſs of her grief it ſeemed to her that no circumſtance was wanting, that could add to her miſery. But the next day proved to Ethelreda, that comparatively the ſufferings of the preceding one had been inſignificant.

When Conway quitted Ethelreda, his wonder and amazement, joined to the rage and miſery he ſuffered,

ſuffered, ſeemed to threaten him with loſs of reaſon. He ſtood in the gallery that led from the door, ruminating, or rather endeavouring to recollect what had paſſed in the few ſhort moments he ſaw Mrs. Carloville. He expected to hear her call him back; he thought ſhe would have attempted her own juſtification: but after ſtanding immovable five minutes, which appeared to him as ſo many hours, he ſlowly walked out of the precincts of St. Siffrid's, making ſomething like a vow never to enter them again. He went on without recollection, and almoſt without ſenſe; and, unconſcious of the route he had taken, he found himſelf at the entrance of St. Siffrid's wood before he knew he had taken ten ſteps from the Caſtle. He turned round to look at it as if for the laſt time, and, ſtretching out his hands towards it with diſguſt, ſeemed to take leave of it for ever.

Ethelreda, who ſtood at the window that looked towards the park, knew him to be Conway as he aſcended the ſlope; ſhe witneſſed all his actions, though ſhe heard not his complaints or his reproaches. She thought only of making him return, and opened the window, before ſhe recollected it was impoſſible he ſhould hear her voice at ſuch a diſtance. "I will ſend Llewellyn to him!" cried ſhe; "I can truſt Llewellyn."—— Llewellyn was ſent for. "Go to Mr. Conway, and tell him I wiſh to ſpeak to him inſtantly!" ſaid Ethelreda, with an impatience that almoſt ſtopped her utterance. "At Strathener, madam?"—"No, no, no, in the park! There!" cried ſhe, ſhowing him the window.

Poor Llewellyn was not the ſwifteſt of meſſengers; he had been many years in the ſervice of Sir Roger and in that of his daughters; he began to grow old. He, however, went with all his ſpeed:

ſpeed. but Conway, who ſaw him long before he could arrive to deliver his meſſage, darted into the wood, and effectually evaded the vigilance of his purſuer.

Llewellyn, however, continued to advance towards the premiſes of Strathener, in hopes of overtaking the fugitive; when ſuddenly croſſing a path in the wood, he was ſtopped by the elder Mr. Conway. Llewellyn was without a hat, and his countenance joined to that circumſtance raiſed the curioſity of Mr. Conway. "Where are you going?" ſaid he.

Llewellyn made no anſwer. Not that he had been forbidden, but he thought Mr. Conway, whom he diſliked, had no right to aſk.

Mr. Conway repeated his queſtion, and Llewellyn anſwered in Welch, "He had loſt ſomething." It was a language Mr. Conway affected not to underſtand; he therefore only deſired to know, whether Mrs. Carloville was at home, and took the path leading through the wood to St. Siffrid's Caſtle.

Ethelreda's eyes were ſtill fixed upon the wood, and ſo blinded by tears, that when Mr. Conway appeared ſhe took him for his ſon, and impatiently waited his arrival; and no ſooner did his ſtep in the hall give her notice he was coming, than, throwing open the door, ſhe exclaimed, "You do not refuſe to hear my juſtification then?—I ſcarcely hoped ſo much indulgence!"

"Mrs. Carloville deſerves every indulgence:" ſaid Mr. Conway, calmly; "at leaſt I hope ſo."

Ethelreda's precipitate eagerneſs explained to Mr. Conway her miſtake; he ſaw at once too, there was a miſunderſtanding, and that his ſon had received ſome unfavourable impreſſion ſhe wiſhed to remove. It appeared to him inſtantly, that this was the moment to ſeparate them for ever.

Every

Every circumſtance ſeemed to aſſiſt his deſign, and the arrangement he had already made for Conway's departure promiſed him ſucceſs even to a certainty. He took no notice of the conſternation Ethelreda appeared in when ſhe diſcovered her miſtake, nor did he ſeem to obſerve that ſhe was near fainting: but with all his cuſtomary politeneſs even to affectation, he entreated he might not keep her ſtanding, though at the ſame moment he feared ſhe would fall on the floor. Yet he was embarraſſed in ſpite of all his hard policy, when he recollected the ſufferings he was preparing for his ſon. As for Ethelreda, he thought not of hers, becauſe ſhe was poor, and inured to diſappointment.

While he was making theſe reflections, Ethelreda, determined not to ſuffer his pride to triumph in her confuſion, and exerting all the energy ſhe poſſeſſed, with aſtoniſhing calmneſs entreated him to let her know to what circumſtance ſhe owed the honour of his viſit. Her manner when ſhe choſe it was uncommonly dignified, and ſhe ſeemed at this moment as if animated by the pride and conſequence of all her long line of anceſtors.

Mr. Conway augured badly to his own cauſe when he ſaw her ſo compoſed; he heſitated ſome moments, debating with himſelf whether he ſhould or ſhould not ſpeak openly to Mrs. Carloville; and had not avarice placed the ſtrongeſt of all bars between his ſon's will and his own, at that moment he had entreated Mrs. Carloville to become one of his family. It was neceſſary however to return ſome anſwer to her queſtion.

"I came, madam—not to wound your conſequence or your pride, as I am fearful you will think I do, becauſe the ſubject itſelf is forbidding"—He ſtopped, as if to give her an opportunity

tunity of ſpeaking. Ethelreda looked as if ſhe expected him to proceed. "It is therefore neceſſary then," continued he, "that I ſhould be explicit, and ſpeak with more than common exactneſs (I mean preciſion), that you, madam, may know exactly my objections and determinations."

"I am prepared to hear you with attention, ſir," ſaid Ethelreda haughtily, and bluſhing at the indignity ſhe had drawn on herſelf.

"You now comprehend, madam, that what I have to ſay relates to you, and to my ſon?"

Ethelreda bowed. Mr. Conway reſumed.

"My ſon, then——"

"I wiſh *only* to hear what relates to *myſelf*, ſir,"—ſaid ſhe with ſtill more haughtineſs.

"Very well, madam." He was ſilent ſome moments to recover his temper, which had manifeſtly failed him at her interruption; he had intended to make a pompous diſplay of his expectations and views for his ſon, and her manner explained to him that ſhe had perceived it.

"All I have to ſay, madam, is ſimply this; that I have no objection whatever to yourſelf or your family: it is ſolely your want of fortune, joined to my other engagements, that renders you an ineligible match for my ſon. Henry Hugh Conway has an ancient name to ſupport, and *may* have a title. His fortune, though it will be large, is not alone adequate to his birth and expectations; I have therefore fixed on Lady Octavia Conway as a proper wife for him, in every reſpect his equal." He pauſed for an anſwer. Ethelreda was ſilent.

"Every preliminary is ſettled between the principal powers, I mean myſelf and Lord Trecaſtle; and your influence, I am perſuaded, properly directed, will induce my ſon to guarantee the

the treaty—I wait upon you, madam, to aſk it." This laſt ſentence was delivered ſo much in the tone of a ſupplicating ambaſſador who is directed to ſoothe rather than to irritate, that Ethelreda, always alive to the ridiculous, determined to anſwer him as much as poſſible in the coſtume he had adopted, and accordingly in the ſtyle of a ſovereign ſhe ſaid: "I have heard you, ſir, with attention; you will find that not one ſyllable of your repreſentation has been loſt. I thank you perſonally for your approbation of myſelf and of my family. What remains to be ſaid will perhaps give you more pleaſure than were I to grant your laſt requeſt. I cannot influence your ſon, ſince I have not any influence over him: to attempt it therefore would be to expoſe my own inability and the weakneſs of your allies; it would be giving the name of power to a ſhadow, were I to exert any; and I am well aware, that you already know the ſucceſs of an enterpriſe depends often more on its apparent probability than any other circumſtances, however advantageous!"—Ethelreda's voice never faltered once as ſhe delivered this long ſentence, nor did her countenance betray any ſign of weakneſs. She aroſe at the concluſion of her ſpeech: her features changed a little when ſhe deſired her compliments to Mrs. Conway, as ſhe obſerved him take his hat. He ſeemed ſtruck with her manner, but attempted not to anſwer what ſhe had been ſaying. He bowed politely but not cordially, and withdrew, doubting whether Mrs. Carloville meant to ridicule him or pay him a compliment by the manner in which ſhe had replied to him.

CHAP. XIX.

Natis in uſum lætitiæ ſcyphis
Pugnare, Thracum eſt. Tollite barbarum
Morem, verecundumque Bacchum
Sanguineis prohibete rixis.
Vino & lucernis Medus acinaces
Immane quantum diſcrepat! impium
Lenite clamorem, ſodales,
Et cubito remanete preſſo.

HORAT. od. xxvii.

AFTER Conway eſcaped from Llewellyn's purſuit, he wandered through the wood, avoiding carefully all the paths where either family was accuſtomed to walk. Nor did he once recollect that at Strathener a large party of gentlemen was expected, ſome of whom he had invited, and whom it was neceſſary he ſhould introduce to his uncle. The ſun was ſinking in the horizon: its ſetting beams alone recalled to Conway's mind, his engagement. He haſtily looked at his watch: it wanted but twenty minutes of ſeven, and at a quarter before ſix the family dined. He walked precipitately on to the Caſtle in defiance of the heat, and entered the dining-room juſt as the ladies were quitting it.

Not only Conway's abſence at dinner, but his dreſs, required an apology. His hair blown about his face, almoſt entirely robbed of powder—the ribbon that tied it gone—a morning coat, torn in his wandering through the underwood—and without a hat—His whole appearance, together with the agitation of his countenance, repreſent-

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ed ſtrongly a perſon ſuddenly eſcaped from ſome terrible calamity. He had ſtill recollection enough to beg pardon for his abſence: but the deficiency of his dreſs quite eſcaped him. He took his place at the table next Sir Francis L'Eſterling, and occaſionally ſpoke with tolerable compoſure to Lord Beralſton, and all the party, except the Count de Clerac-Auxerre, whom he eyed from time to time with looks of paſſion bordering on madneſs.

De Clerac himſelf was for the firſt time out of ſpirits; he thought he had only been amuſing himſelf with Mrs. Carloville, and he was ſurpriſed to find that her diſdain affected him. Still however his vanity prevented him from taking the mortification with humility, and in hopes of venting his anger he indulged himſelf in ſeveral very illiberal hints againſt women.

Sir Francis L'Eſterling, who was that day uncommonly abſent, had been filling his glaſs ſo repeatedly without waiting for the reſt of the company, who made a point of not diſturbing his reverie, that he was nearly intoxicated though the moſt temperate man in the world. Conway too, who ſat next him, had a few times done the ſame, from want of obſervation; which joined to his long abſtinence (for he had eaten nothing ſince the morning), the intenſe heat, and, more than all, the perturbation of his mind, ſeemed to have raiſed his ſpirits beyond their uſual pitch. He talked a vaſt deal, and liſtened eagerly to every ſyllable De Clerac uttered, in hopes of hearing him ſay ſomething at which he might take umbrage.

De Clerac ſtill continued talking in the ſame ſtrain, and at laſt with ſo little caution or diſguiſe, that Conway and Caerleon both plainly

perceived that ſome particular lady was meant by him.

Lord Caerleon deſired him to chooſe another ſubject.

"No," ſaid he: "Je parlerai ſur ceci; c'eſt un theme inépuiſable!"

"You ſhall leave the room then, M. de Clerac-Auxerre!" ſaid Conway, half choked with paſſion.

"Et plus encore," ſaid De Clerac, looking contemptuouſly at Conway, "I will ſay, Je dirai qu'il n'y a pas une femme, not one, dont la reputation vaut ceci, not worth this," ſaid he, holding up the ſtem of ſome grapes.

"You mean the ladies of your *own* country, I preſume, M. le Comte?" ſaid Caerleon, looking fiercely at him.

"No, no. I mean England, le pays de Galles."

"Say that again, and I will knock you down!" cried Conway in a voice of thunder.

"Viva tutte le vezzoſe donne, amabili amoroſe!" ſung Sir Francis; and De Clerac repeated "*I mean Wales*"—looking pointedly at Conway.

Conway did not wait for a ſecond defiance; he ſprung nimbly acroſs the table, and ſtruck De Clerac a blow that made him ſtagger back in his chair. The latter was not ſlow in returning it; but, unfortunately miſtaking his aim, he beſtowed it on Lord Caerleon inſtead of him from whom he had received the affront.

In a moment all was riot and confuſion. "Arms! arms!" echoed from every mouth, the bottles and glaſſes were engaged in the combat, it was the feaſt of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ.

Lord Trecaſtle and Mr. Conway had been called out on buſineſs ſome few minutes previous

ous to this fracas, and were not yet returned, or in all probability they would have deviſed ſome means for preventing the diſpute from coming to ſo hoſtile an iſſue. In the midſt of this univerſal anarchy, not one gentleman offered himſelf as the ſecond of De Clerac. Sir Francis obſerved it with ſorrow; and though he was averſe to engaging in the quarrel, the ſubject of which had entirely eſcaped him, yet his predilection for foreigners made him pity the Count's awkward predicament; to relieve him from which he offered to be his ſecond, and was thankfully accepted.

Still there was a material point to be adjuſted: either Conway or Caerleon muſt fight with the Count de Clerac: each inſiſted upon the priority of right.

It became a ſcene of confuſion almoſt equal to that deſcribed by Arioſto in the camps of Charlemagne and the pagan king. And to add to the tumult, Sir Francis recited in a loud voice the paſſage in the Orlando, deſcribing the manner in which all the chiefs inſiſted upon the prior right of combat; ſome for the ſword Durindana, ſome for the ſteed Frontino, ſome for the armour of Hector, and ſome for the horſe Brigliad'oro. In ſhort, to ſpeak in the language of Don Quixote, "here was all the confuſion of King Agramante's camp, *without* the wiſdom of King Sobrino."

The order of combat was ſtill unſettled when Lord Trecaſtle and his brother made their reappearance. They entered unnoticed, ſo great was the noiſe, and ſo thoroughly were the whole company occupied, the leaſt intereſted in trying to accommodate the enraged parties.

"Harry Conway! Caerleon! what is the matter?"—cried Lord Trecaſtle, obſerving his ſon and his nephew, each with piſtols.

What

"What are you at, Henry?" cried Mr. Conway.

"*He* has dared—" cried Conway, pointing to the Count, "*he* has *dared* to defame Mrs. Carloville!"

"And what right have you to reſent it?" aſked Mr. Conway angrily.

"I will anſwer no queſtions!" cried Conway, in a voice hoarſe with paſſion. "Fire! De Clerac."

"Not *here*, ſir! Not in *my* houſe ſhall the laws of hoſpitality be infringed upon"—ſaid Lord Trecaſtle in a determined tone.

"*I inſiſt* upon meeting him firſt, Conway!" cried Caerleon. "Did he not ſtrike me?"

"What you too!" cried Lord Trecaſtle in an agony of paſſion: "do you *dare* me, Caerleon?"

"*You*, my lord, or any man. Would you have me ſuffer a blow?"—"Fire, De Clerac, this inſtant!"

Hugh! Lord Caerleon! leave my houſe this moment! Do you think I will ſuffer a foreigner and a gueſt to be ill treated in it by you?"

"I *will* leave your houſe, never to enter it again," ſaid Caerleon, reſolutely. "And the reaſon will redound to the *honour* of your *houſe*," ironically—"that I left it becauſe I inſiſted on revenging an inſult, an injury, a diſgrace! I thought, even had I aſked you to be my ſecond, you would have complied."

"No, Caerleon, I deny that; it is impoſſible you can be ſo ignorant of my principles, as to imagine I would ever fight a duel with a man whilſt he is my gueſt"—ſaid Lord Trecaſtle more calmly. "And," continued he, "ſince you repreſent the caſe as ſo urgent, fight with the Count if you pleaſe, but do not bring ſo great a diſ-

a diſgrace upon my name as to do it within the walls of the Caſtle."

While Lord Caerleon was arguing the matter with his father, Conway and the Count, accompanied by Lord Beralſton and Sir Francis, ſlipped out unperceived, and in two fires their diſpute was decided. Owing to the duſk of the evening, each took ſo bad an aim as to occaſion the other no injury. After the ſecond fire the Count condeſcended to make an apology, which Conway was deſired to accept; and the gentlemen ſhook hands, though with ſome remains of malice in their hearts; at leaſt in Conway's, who, poſſeſſing all the gallantry of a ſailor, could not patiently bear to hear any woman lightly ſpoken of undeſervedly, much leſs the woman whom of all others he thought of moſt highly, though he believed at the ſame moment ſhe had given him up for ever.

It was now not very difficult to appeaſe Lord Caerleon. De Clerac declared the blow he had given was accidental, and apologized for it; Lord Caerleon accepted the conceſſion, and all parties amicably adjourned to the drawing-room, except Conway and his father. There the ladies impatiently expected them; though very fortunately they knew nothing of this fray till it was over.

Henry Conway's unfortunately timed viſit to St. Siffrid's Caſtle was meant to inform Ethelreda of the ſudden neceſſity he was under of going immediately to London. He had received letters importing that he muſt immediately take the command of the frigate to which he had been appointed. He therefore intended to take leave of Ethelreda; and to obtain, if it were poſſible, ſome kind of promiſe from her, not to let any other ſuperſede him in her good opinions, which,

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in ſpite of all his fears and apprehenſions, he flattered himſelf he poſſeſſed. What he took for perfidy and want of faith in Ethelreda's behaviour, therefore, wounded him with tenfold ſharpneſs; though at the ſame time he could not endure to hear the Count de Clerac charge her with levity, whoſe incongruity was an enigma too inexplicable for Conway to unravel till his mind was more compoſed, and his comprehenſion more collected.

Mr. Conway and his ſon went to the library in preference to the drawing-room, not to talk over the recent quarrel, but to ſettle the time and manner of Captain Conway's departure. It was Mr. Conway's and Lord Trecaſtle's influence that had procured a ſhip for Conway juſt at this juncture. At all events, Mr. Conway ſaw it was neceſſary Mrs. Carloville and his ſon ſhould be ſeparated: beſides, it was highly detrimental to his plans that Conway ſhould witneſs Lady Octavia's decided preference for the Count de Clerac, who evidently intended to ſecure the lady and her fortune.

Mr. Conway therefore ſtudiouſly avoided mentiong Ethelreda to his ſon, leſt he ſhould think of coming to ſome explanation; for it was evident to him, that one was wanting. He reſolved, then, to keep Ethelreda's diſavowal of all influence over him, as a ſtrong body of reſerve, to bring forward whenever the urgency of his plans ſhould require it. And it was finally ſettled that Conway ſhould depart early in the morning, without taking leave of any one.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

———a brother noble,
Whoſe nature is ſo far from doing harm
That he ſuſpects none; on whoſe fooliſh honeſty
My practices ride eaſy. I ſee the buſineſs.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet, that I can faſhion fit.
LEAR.

IN the drawing-room the Count and Lord Caerleon took up the attention of the ladies entirely. Lord Caerleon undertook to relate the manner of the quarrel to Miſs Beralſton; and whilſt he gave to the ſubject what turn he pleaſed, it is certain he acquitted himſelf to Miſs Beralſton's ſatisfaction entirely.

De Clerac found it more difficult to exculpate himſelf with Octavia. He had behaved very unpardonably; but however, partly by flattery, partly by laughing, and moſtly by telling lies, he contrived to leave Octavia tolerably well ſatisfied with his excuſes.

But the ſervants told the ſtory very differently to the ſoubrettes; and the ſoubrettes faithfully told *all* to their miſtreſſes at night, with ſome few additions of their own. In the ſervants' hall the ſtory ran, "that Captain Conway was in love with Mrs. Carloville; that *he* was jealous of the Count, and Lord Caerleon of *both*; for," added they, "it was doubtful whether there would not have been a duel between the young lord and his couſin."

Theſe accounts correſponded ſo badly with the very lame ones given by the two gentlemen, and ſo many circumſtances concurred to prove that the ſoubrettes and the valets were beſt informed, that Lady Octavia breathed nothing but jealouſy and revenge; meaning to call next day on Ethelreda, accompanied by Miſs Beralſton; and by ſome means or other, yet undeviſed, to retort all her own mortification and diſappointment upon the head of her hitherto too potent rival; for to have occaſioned a duel, was in the eyes of Lady Octavia a crime ſo heinous, that ſhe could not have pardoned it in any but herſelf. But, alas! Lady Octavia never had occaſioned one! though more miſchievouſly inclined than moſt ladies.

Ethelreda had already heard the detail from Llewellyn, who had been at Strathener. He was told by the ſervants of the Caſtle, who, not forgetting the heroine of the combat, would by ſome means or other hear the whole repeated, extolled the ardour of the combatants, and the beauty of the lady who had excited them to deeds of arms.

Ethelreda was ſhocked to death when Llewellyn related the whole in the pompous terms of chivalry he had learned out of the old Romances in Sir Roger's library; and tho' ſhe was ſpared the miſery of hearing that either was wounded, the idea of becoming the topic of converſation for the whole country, hurt her delicacy, and drew upon Conway almoſt her mental diſpleaſure; though ſhe remembered ſhe might never perhaps have an opportunity of reproaching him for it, or of exculpating herſelf. She was ſtill ignorant of his departure; for the Strathener ſervants, too much occupied with the late adventure, had forgotten to mention it. She felt diſappointed that Conway had

had made no ſecond attempt to ſee her; but when ſhe thought of her converſation with his father, ſhe no longer doubted but Conway had given way to his father's entreaties, and that ſhe had been ſacrificed to his duty. Even her pride deſerted her at this moment; and had not the option been denied her, rather than loſe him for ever, ſhe had conſented to make any promiſe he had choſen to have required of her.

Thus haraſſed by her own thoughts, but without ſpirits to fly from her ſolitude, Ethelreda felt thankful, but perplexed, when the names of Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, Lady Octavia Conway, and Miſs Beralſtone were announced.

"Mrs. Carloville, we come to congratulate you," ſaid Lady Octavia, impatient to begin the ſubject.

"To congratulate *me*, Lady Octavia! Is it poſſible?" ſaid Ethelreda with ſurpriſe.

"Why, yes," ſaid Lady Mariamne, "on the proweſs of your numerous champions, Mrs. Carloville."

"Your beauty will become as celebrated as that of Helen, or Cleopatra, or, what's the name of the other?" ſaid Octavia, applying to her ſiſter.

"The Venus of Medicis, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Lady Mariamne with a ſneer.

"You diſtreſs me exceedingly, ladies," ſaid Ethelreda, with a tear in her eye. "You cannot imagine I exult in this moſt unfortunate duel?"

"Nay," ſaid Lady Octavia, "you cannot call it an *un*fortunate duel, ſince it has added to your train of lovers—I mean, openly. The Count de Clerac is no deſpicable acquiſition."

"Nor Lord Caerleon"—ſaid Miſs Beralſton, ſpeaking for the firſt time.

"You

"You have omitted Captain Conway," ſaid Lady Mariamne.

"Captain Conway?—Oh, Captain Conway," cried Octavia, laughing moſt ſpitefully, "is a very old captive, almoſt old enough to be diſcarded. Beſides," continued ſhe, "I underſtand he departed this morning for London."

This laſt piece of intelligence was too much for Ethelreda's ſpirits in their preſent ſtate to bear, and ſhe actually burſt into tears.

Poor Miſs Beralſton, notwithſtanding her own fancied wrongs, was affected at Ethelreda's diſtreſs: ſhe endeavoured to conſole her, and, looking reproachfully at the two ſiſters, who only ſtared, ſhe thought to alter the ſubject by enquiring whether Mrs. Carloville had heard from her ſiſter.

"But once," ſaid Ethelreda: "and her letter is the only pleaſure I have received ſince her departure." At that moment the door opened, and Lord Caerleon entered unannounced. The two ladies looked diſconcerted, for they both feared their brother; and Miſs Beralſton turned pale.

"What!" cried he, much alarmed, "is Mrs. Carloville ill? Send for ſome one!" continued he: "I will go myſelf! For heaven's ſake, what is the matter?" with ſo much anxiety in his countenance that poor Miſs Beralſton could ſcarcely reſtrain her tears.

"No, no! I am very well;" ſaid Ethelreda, with a look that contradicted her aſſertion, as ſhe glanced her eyes towards the two ladies.

In an inſtant Lord Carleon comprehended by the faces of the whole group, that ſome ſpiteful ſallies of his ſiſters, whoſe tempers with regard to Mrs. Carloville he perfectly underſtood, muſt have occaſioned Ethelreda's diſtreſs. He looked furiouſly at them, and with a pointed ſneer, and

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in the moſt acrimonious tone, ſaid, "You *may* be very amuſing, ladies; but as your company ſeems to have rather an unpleaſant effect on the ſpirits of Mrs. Carloville, I muſt deprive her of your company." At the concluſion of this ſpeech Lord Caerleon looked towards Miſs Beralſton.

Ethelreda, alarmed, exerted herſelf to beg they would prolong their viſit, and even hoped they would repeat it; for it was by no means her wiſh to make any open difference between the families: but Lord Caerleon was determined; the ladies looked mortified; Miſs Beralſton cried;—and thus ended the maliciouſly intended triumph over Mrs. Carloville.

Mr. Conway had no ſooner diſpoſed of his ſon to his ſatisfaction, than Strathener became irkſome to him, and his own numerous ſchemes required his preſence in London; particularly the grand one to which all his views tended, namely, of recovering the title of Aberconway, which formerly had been borne by the head of the Conway family, but forfeited for rebellion, together with Conway Caſtle, by ſome of his turbulent predeceſſors, in the reign of Henry the Fourth. The title of Trecaſtle had been beſtowed upon the family of Conway at the Reſtoration, not ſo much as a reward for its ſervices, as to ſecure the fidelity of a houſe of ſo much conſequence and power. None but the title borne by his anceſtors, amongſt not the moſt remote of whom he reckoned the Merediths and the Glendowrwys, could content the ſoaring ambition of Mr. Conway; and inwardly he deſpiſed the want of it in his brother who could tamely ſee him taking meaſures to ſuperſede him as it were in his birthright. But theſe meaſures entirely eſcaped the obſervation of Lord Trecaſtle and his ſon; either of

of whom poſſeſſed enough of the family ſpirit not to ſuffer ſuch an uſurpation whilſt they had the power of preventing it. It was the ruinous ſtate of Conway Caſtle that made Mr. Conway ſo anxious to promote a match between his ſon and Lady Octavia, whoſe large independent fortune, the legacy of an uncle, would be extremely uſeful to him in repairs. It was the hopes of one day becoming, as it were, from a younger brother the head of his family, that animated Mr. Conway to be indefatigable in the ſervices in which he was employed by Government; in expectation of receiving, as a reward for his uncommon abilities as a negociator, the title of Earl of Aberconway, for which he privately ſolicited. And ſo great was his caution with regard to his ſon and Mrs. Conway, that his deſigns were not even gueſſed at by them. The former he knew would have bluſhed at the injuſtice of obtaining by underhand methods what Lord Trecaſtle looked upon as his abſolute property; and in fact the grandeur of Conway's ſpirit would immediately have prompted him to lay the whole before his uncle. Thus circumſtanced, Mr. Conway paid himſelf many compliments upon the adroit manner in which he had diſpoſed of Captain Conway; and perhaps the idea of making the fortune of his brother's daughter inſtrumental in the aggrandizement of his own family, to the prejudice of Lord Trecaſtle's branch of it, was a ſtroke of fine policy, that afforded him more pleaſure in the contemplation than the poſſeſſion of the much wiſhed for title itſelf would have done; ſince he expected it would give his talents additional celebrity: it was, in the language of the French politicians, both to *culbuter* and to *contrecarrer*.

Mr. Conway departed for London, leaving Mrs. Conway at Strathener for the air, which

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was neceſſary to her health; who now, no longer ſubject to the ſuſpicious eye of her huſband, indulged herſelf in ſometimes paying a melancholy viſit to Ethelreda;——melancholy, becauſe each made her feel more ſenſibly her ſon's misfortune, in being obliged to relinquiſh ſuch a woman; for ſhe ſaw no proſpect of a change in Mr. Conway's ſentiments, and ſhe never doubted but Henry would ſubmit to his father. Still ſhe ardently prayed ſome unforeſeen occurrence or event might prevent a union from taking place between him and her niece, to whom ſhe had a confirmed diſlike; and indeed there appeared ſome probability that her prayers would be granted, ſince the Count de Clerac's aſſiduities were redoubled, notwithſtanding the known general diſlike of Lord Trecaſtle to foreigners, under the moſt favourable circumſtances; but as he had the power to withhold ſome part of Lady Octavia's fortune, though by much the larger was at her own diſpoſal, Mrs. Conway dreaded a thouſand impediments between her and her wiſhes. But, more than all her own troubles, thoſe of Ethelreda tormented her. She loved her with the affection of a mother—yet ſhe ſaw her deſerted, ſolitary, dependent. She ſaw her beautiful, accompliſhed, elegant, with ten times more than common talents and ten thouſand times more than common attractions, giving up her days to ſorrow and diſcontent. And what was ſtill more alarming, ſhe obſerved, or fancied ſhe obſerved, her health declining as well as her ſpirits.

Her viſits then could not fail of being melancholy ones, ſince they preſented to her a young woman, endowed with every grace to adorn a life of ſplendour, paſſing her days in grief and ſilence amidſt the towers of a ſolitary caſtle, whoſe gloomy turrets and maſſy wall, together with the dim light that ſhone through its windows encumbered

bered with architecture, always brought to the mind of Mrs. Conway the ſtate priſon of a romance—and Ethelreda, the unfortunate heroine, who was doomed to ſpend her days there, unpitied, and hopeleſs of redreſs.

CHAP. XXI.

Something there is more needful than expence;
And ſomething previous ev'n to taſte—'tis ſenſe:
Good ſenſe, which only is the gift of Heaven,
And, tho' no ſcience, fairly worth the ſeven.
POPE.

THE common civilities that relations ſometimes do, and ſometimes do not, ſhew each other, obliged Ethelreda to exert herſelf, and endeavour to ſhake off the apathy that ſtole upon her. It was neceſſary ſhe ſhould accept an invitation of Lady Mariamne's, who was never deficient in any of the ceremonials of politeneſs. It had often been repeated, and as often evaded; but at laſt, at the very preſſing inſtances of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, Ethelreda agreed to paſs three or four days at Kilgaren.

Sir Francis, in the courſe of a few months, had advanced rapidly with what he called his improvements. The grotto was quite finiſhed; a ſort of hollow way, bored round one ſide of the hill, admitting the light at each end. The whole was ſtill a profound ſecret to Lady Mariamne, who invariably never condeſcended to aſk a ſingle queſtion

queſtion about any thing that was doing by Sir Francis's orders, that ſhe might have the pleaſure of diſliking it when finiſhed. And Sir Francis's anxiety to have Ethelreda at his houſe was merely to conſult her on his plans; becauſe Lord Caerleon had ſpoken with rapture of her taſte and knowledge in architecture. She was therefore no ſooner in the houſe than Sir Francis entreated ſhe would look at ſome ſtatues he had bought in Rome at immoderate prices. Some, he ſaid, *were* copies, and ſome, real antiques.

"I want your aſſiſtance, Mrs. Carloville, in the placing of the Gladiator combatendo, the Amazone, and the Ercole——I ſhall put them in the grotto," ſaid Sir Francis, lowering his voice to a whiſper.

"What! You do not mean to put theſe odious undraped figures where *I* may ever ſee them?" ſaid Lady Mariamne.

"And I have a pair of Termini," continued Sir Francis: "I think, Mrs. Carloville, to put them at the entrance; and a *Torſo*, which I am at a loſs how to diſpoſe of; it is the moſt invaluable of my whole collection."

"A hideous, unſhapely, broken lump!"—exclaimed Lady Mariamne.

"Profeſſor Winckelmann would have fallen into raptures at the ſight of it!" ſighed Sir Francis.

"Or have diſcovered another ſpinning Hercules!" ſaid Ethelreda, with an arch ſmile. "But," continued ſhe, "I agree with Lady Mariamne, it is ſo little of an *ornament*, that it is only fit to *enrich* a muſeum."

"I have ſome very fine Nola vaſes, in which I mean to plant orange-trees: thoſe, I imagine, will pleaſe you, Lady Mariamne?" ſaid he, in hopes of obtaining pardon for having made the grotto

grotto of Poſilippo, ſo contrary to her Ladyſhip's injunctions.

"What *foundation* have you to ſuppoſe ſo, Sir Francis?" ſaid the diſobliging lady. "I hate orange trees!—I hate the country!"—Sir Francis made no anſwer, but, ſhewing ſome plans of architecture, he ſubmiſſively aſked Ethelreda what maſter ſhe preferred?

"What do you think of Giuglio Romano?—Perhaps you prefer Vignola? or Palladio? or Schamozzi?" Sir Francis did not give her time to anſwer; it was too great a pleaſure to him to repeat the names himſelf. "I intend to follow the Roman villas in my improvements;" delighted to meet with ſome one who could underſtand him, and who had the politeneſs to liſten to him: "I think the four porticos deſigned by Giuglio Romano, at Villa Madama, are a perfect model," continued he: "as well as I remember, my Lord Caerleon admired them prodigiouſly! I intend, too," ſaid he, ſpeaking rapidly, "to erect an amphitheatrical arcade, ſupporting ſtone baluſtrades and terraces, with fountains and falls of water; but *no* trees—none but orange and myrtle, in vaſes. I am fixed not to have a ſingle ſhrub or tree in my garden beſides; nor even a flower, for my ſenſes are ſo perfectly *Italian*, I think the perfume of them extremely offenſive."

"Then I muſt tell you, Sir Francis, you had better get a ſet of *Engliſh* ones immediately; for I ſhall fill the houſe throughout with roſes, carnations, and jeſſamine."

In theſe tireſome converſations paſſed the two days of Ethelreda's viſit, uninterrupted by other company. In the mean time, great preparations were making by Sir Francis for a grand fête; and when Ethelreda propoſed to depart, her company was ſo ſtrenuouſly requeſted, ſhe was abſolutely conſtrained to lengthen her viſit.

When

When Conway reached London, he was not much more reconciled to his unfortunate fate than when he left Strathener; but he was diſpleaſed with himſelf for leaving the country without firſt ſeeing Ethelreda, and hearing from herſelf why ſhe abandoned him. The incongruity of the Comte de Clerac's proceedings ſeemed to ſtrike him for the firſt time; and he began to apprehend that all his misfortunes had been occaſioned by his own precipitancy. But his profeſſional ſituation prevented him from returning; he was ordered to be ready to receive his ſailing orders at a moment's warning; for which he impatiently waited, when he received information that his deſtination was changed. He was ordered to prepare for a long abſence, and to be ready to ſail in a week's time upon ſecret ſervice.

No ſooner did Conway gain this intelligence, than his reſolutions were unalterably taken: he left London inſtantly, poſitively determined, provided Ethelreda condeſcended to juſtify her conduct to him, to put it out of the power of any future accident to ſeparate them. He ſuffered nothing to delay him on the road, and reached St. Siffrid's Caſtle on the morning of the day fixed for the fête at Kilgaren-hall.

Sir Francis promiſed himſelf great celebrity from his intended fête: he had ſpared no expence to make it ſtriking and elegant; he had given out it was to be a ſelect thing; though half the country was invited, and cards of invitation in whole packs had been ſent to London. The whole arrangement was laid before Lord Caerleon and Mrs. Carloville, who highly approved of every part of the entertainment—Ethelreda more from civility, than from any pleaſure ſhe expected to find in it. Indeed ſhe would willingly have given it up entirely, to have been

ſpared

ſpared the trouble of contributing towards it; for Sir Francis had requeſted beds for ſome of his gueſts at St. Siffrid's Caſtle; an accommodation ſhe could by no means refuſe to grant, as the company were *quartered by ſcores* upon every houſe in the neighbourhood for many miles round.

Sir Francis, who was extremely recherché in his ideas of excellence, was full of fears, as the day approached, that the entertainment would not be equal to the expectations of his gueſts. "I wiſh," ſaid he, ſpeaking to Lord Caerleon of the muſic," I wiſh it had been poſſible to have procured Concialini from Berlin, and Marcheſini from Naples: we ſhall have but few fine voices, and thoſe only what *London* produces!"

Notwithſtanding his fears, Sir Francis intended the muſic ſhould make the moſt intereſting part of the amuſement. He himſelf had ſet an air in one of Metaſtaſio's operas: the reſt of the muſic, entirely new for the occaſion, was compoſed by a celebrated maſter. All the firſt dancers, as well as the beſt muſical performers, were engaged to aſſiſt in the opera, and diverſify the entertainment with ballets. Not to loſe ſight of Roman manners, Sir Francis had given out that all the company was expected to appear maſqued, and in Carnival habits.

The anxiouſly-expected day arrived at laſt. The morning was as fine as Sir Francis himſelf could have deſired; and, though the firſt of September, the day and evening were exceſſively warm, and the moon roſe with ſurpriſing ſplendour. Between eight and nine the gardens were crowded with numerous groteſque figures; for Sir Francis had fixed upon a *rural* fete; and the opera was to be performed in the Teatro di Verdura, which was adorned with the moſt brilliant

ſcenes;

ſcenes; whilſt innumerable coloured lamps, arranged with great elegance about the theatre, together with an amazing profuſion in every part of the gardens, gave ſo great a brilliancy to the coup d'œil, that the whole ſeemed the effect of enchantment. Sir Francis was delighted he had not yet deſtroyed the trees in his pleaſure-grounds, to make room for the arcade, as he perceived it would very indifferently have ſupplied their place on the preſent occaſion. In different parts of the gardens were placed refreſhments, piled up in pyramids and fantaſtic forms, and ſo interſperſed with wreaths and lamps that they deceived the eye, changing their whimſical appearance at every ſtep. Here a generous Armenian merchant unpacked his bales of Turkiſh handkerchiefs, and diſtributed them, with the royal heron plume, and vaſes of the rich ottar of the Eaſt, to the beauties that ſurrounded him, with a liberal hand. There a ſmart, witty Pariſian guided the wheel of a lottery where there were none but prizes. Pedlars gave away their wares, and Punch and all his puppets entertained gratis.

At nine the repreſentation began; and all the characters repaired to the theatre, in which ſeats were arranged ſufficient to accommodate the numerous crowd. Lady Mariamne and Sir Francis were unmaſked, as well as Ethelreda, who, having neither ſpirits nor time to prepare a ſplendid dreſs, was permitted by her Ladyſhip to appear as ſhe pleaſed. She however quitted her mourning for the firſt time ſince her father's death. It had been prolonged ſix months by that of Mr. Carloville. She therefore ſimply dreſſed herſelf in a robe of muſlin, and placed upon her head a ſmall grey hat, full of white feathers. Her figure alone would have drawn upon her the obſervation of the company; but unmaſked, all eyes

eyes were fixed upon her; for never was beauty ſo ſtriking, which, joined to the timidity and penſiveneſs of her features, made her the object of univerſal admiration.

Amongſt the numbers that perſecuted her with compliments, De Clerac was eaſily diſcovered: nor was Caerleon deterred from ſaying a thouſand flattering things, by the cloſe attendance of a maſk whom Ethelreda gueſſed to be Miſs Beralſton. In the crowd that followed her, two perſons particularly engaged her attention: one ſeemed to watch her minutely in ſilence, whilſt the other appeared waitting for an opportunity to ſpeak to her alone. She thought the perſon of the latter bore ſome reſemblance to that of Conway; and a latent hope that it might be he, prevented her from withdrawing, as ſhe otherwiſe would have done, diſguſted with the company, and fatigued with their mirth.

The opera, though admirably performed, did not engage her attention, or divert her thoughts one moment from the idea that had taken poſſeſſion of her mind, that Conway was waiting to ſpeak to her.

Her eyes were wandering in ſearch of the maſk that intereſted her curioſity, when a figure repreſenting Merlin, followed by a tribe of Bards and Druids, uttered a few lines, inviting the company to his cell. In a moment the harps of the Bards ſtruck up, and were anſwered by others from the receſſes of the grotto to which Merlin led; and the effect of the inſtruments, and voices that accompanied them, formed a kind of chorus that pleaſed as much for its ſuddenneſs as its novelty.

This invitation of the magician's was intended as the ſignal for a ſupper, which was laid in the grotto; and here, indeed, a ſcene preſented itſelf that

that almoſt left fairy tales behind. The grotto was ſpacious, and ſupported in different parts by rude pillars of rock; and ſeveral ſprings which had been diſcovered in cutting through the hill were formed into ſmall caſcades: though the cavern wound conſiderably, it was ſo judiciouſly managed by means of receſſes and columns, that all the company ſaw each other from end to end at once. At the termination of the grotto, the open ſky appeared—the ſea in the diſtance, and the moon in all her luſtre.

De Clerac, ſeizing Ethelreda's hand, led her to a table, on which was placed, as on every other, a profuſion of all that was rare or ornamental; and in the middle of each, a kind of aviary, made of glittering wire, in which were tame Canary-birds and goldfinches! a device that appeared to give Sir Francis infinite pleaſure; inſomuch, that he could not forbear boaſting the invention.

"It occurred to me," ſaid he, "upon reading that paſſage in Taſſo deſcribing the birds in Armida's Iſland."

"Sir Francis is not quite correct in his quotation; nor do I ſee any connection between Taſſo's birds and theſe," ſaid Caerleon to Ethelreda; "for it does not appear to me that even *you* have animated them to ſing 'Io amo!' and you refuſe to hear it from any—No, not every one;" lowering his voice to a whiſper.

Ethelreda bluſhed, and caſt down her eyes with a look of confuſion; but made no anſwer.

"*Specchi del cor fallaci, infidi lumi,*
Ben riconnoſco in voi gli inganni voſtri:
Ma, che pro', ſe ſchivarli Amor mi toglie?"

ſaid a voice behind her. She inſtantly turned her head to ſee who had addreſſed her, whilſt a deeper bluſh

bluſh coloured her cheek; but all around her were engaged in diſtinct converſations.

"Who is it that ſo elegantly taxes you with perfidy?" ſaid Caerleon, fixing his eyes on her as he threw his maſk aſide, as if to diſcover by the variation of her countenance the degree of credit the accuſation deſerved.

"I rather think," ſaid Ethelreda, heſitating—"it may *not* have been addreſſed to me——ſome other perhaps—"

"I know none near us who read Italian," ſaid Caerleon, negligently.

"No?—Miſs Beralſton does."

Lord Caerleon at that moment contrived to loſe himſelf amongſt the crowd of ſylphs, demons, fairies, druids and magicians that attended the ſupper.

Catches, glees, and ſongs, in the firſt ſtyle of ſinging, by the opera performers, helped to prolong the pleaſures of the repaſt, and add, if poſſible, to the feſtivity of the reſplendent cavern.

Sir Francis had politely intimated, that the company was expected to unmaſk at ſupper, and every one complied accordingly. All was compliment and congratulation on the aſtoniſhing taſte and effect of the entertainment. All joined in praiſing its ſplendour, and in admiring its novelty. Sir Francis's profuſion, his magnificence, his talents for muſic, were dwelt upon by turns: nor did Sir Francis think ſome thouſands badly beſtowed, whilſt his gueſts concurred in declaring him the moſt princely hoſt that ever had entertained.

Ethelreda alone ſat ſilent and grave. She had ſearched in vain for Conway among the parties at ſupper; and, mortified and diſappointed, ſhe patiently liſtened to the rhapſodies of De Clerac, without uttering a ſingle word. Indeed her thoughts

thoughts were partly engaged with the ſingularity of the Italian applied to her. She knew the voice was not Miſs Beralſton's, though ſhe tried to make Caerleon think it was; and ſhe could not miſtake their being addreſſed to her, for the voice was ſo low, and ſo near, that had not Caerleon been very near her he could not have heard it.

Sir Francis was not ſorry when the riſing of his gueſts from the ſupper-table gave him an opportunity of once more raiſing their aſtoniſhment. Merlin, advancing towards the middle of the grotto, waved his wand, and immediately an unperceived curtain fell, and diſcovered an arched ſtair-caſe of rough ſtone, moſt brilliantly illuminated; and the ſound of fiddles, flutes, and oboes at a diſtance, invited dancing.

All prepared to aſcend the ſtair-caſe, ready to behold ſome new wonder—Ethelreda among the reſt, but without De Clerac, from whom ſhe had eſcaped—when a tall magician tapped her on the ſhoulder, and ſaid, "I am Conway!" The flight of ſtairs was not numerous; but they became ſo narrow that only one perſon could aſcend at the ſame time. What then was the aſtoniſhment of the lady who aſcended firſt, when a ſmall door opened, and ſhe found herſelf in a drawing-room, covered with gravel-walks, and full of ſtatues and fountains, flowering ſhrubs, and vaſes, in which grew orange-trees, and myrtles in bloom!

Fortunately it was not Lady Mariamne.

The whole of the company had no ſooner aſcended than the door cloſed, the hanging dropped over it, and left no traces of an entrance. The company diſperſed through the rooms, and began to dance; in each of which there were ſpaces left free from gravel, for the purpoſe.

It was not till then that Lady Mariamne recovered from her ſurpriſe enough to ſpeak. At length ſhe exclaimed, "Sir Francis, where am I?—What have you done?—How came I here?—Which way did I come in?" cried ſhe, looking eagerly round the room. "Oh! for Heaven's ſake ſtop the dancers, or the houſe will fall into that odious grotto underneath! How could you *dare* to make it, when I forbade it abſolutely?—I ſhall die!—I ſhall be buried in the ruins!" cried ſhe, ſcreaming more from paſſion than fear; and then, as if determined to give a pleaſant finiſh to Sir Francis's gala, ſhe fell into a well-counterfeited hyſteric fit.

The feſtival was immediately interrupted; the dancers flocked round the lady; the muſic ceaſed; and ſo great was the curioſity, not with any deſire to aſſiſt, but to ſee, that the company, preſſing violently one againſt the other, overturned ſome vaſes againſt an aſtoniſhingly fine mirror, placed on one ſide of the room to lengthen the perſpective. The rooms were only temporary ones of floor-cloth, for the occaſion. The violence of the blow piercing through, inſtantly demoliſhed one ſide of the apartment, and the amazed gueſts once more ſaw themſelves, as it were, in the gardens. The tumult and crack immediately recovered Lady Mariamne. The alarm was ſpread, that all the houſe was deſcending into the grotto; harlequins were thrown down, and trampled upon by heavy prieſts and fat friars. Kings, ſultanas, Spaniards, ſhepherdeſſes, and peaſants, all interrupted each other in their hurry to eſcape the wreck. Lady Mariamne now ſcreamed with *real* fear; Sir Francis raved, ſtamped, ſwore, entreated the terrified crowd to liſten to him. It was in vain to ſpeak; it was impoſſible to hear; the tumult was beyond deſcription,

deſcription, as the pleaſure had been. Not till all the world had retreated to the gardens, could Lady Mariamne get any one to attend to her; and then, partly from the fear of Sir Francis's diſpleaſure, which ſhe had reaſon to expect, and partly to gratify her own rage, ſhe ordered a chaiſe, with her own ſervants, and immediately quitted Kilgaren-hall; or, as the maſter of the houſe had now named it, Caſino Belvedere.

It was very ſoon generally known in the gardens that Lady Mariamne had left the houſe; and as the gueſts no longer feared for their own ſafety, they thought it neceſſary to conſole Sir Francis.

But Sir Francis was inconſolable; not for the loſs of his coſtly mirror; not for the departure of his termagant lady; but for the total ſtop that had been put to the feſtival. Lord Trecaſtle tried in vain to pacify him, and to perſuade him to ſend after the fugitive. He obſtinately refuſed; and, exclaiming bitterly againſt her affected hyſterics, cried, "I never will, I never can forgive her! If ſhe had waited *but* till to-morrow, ſhe might have demoliſhed every thing! But that woman poſſeſſes the malice of a demon! She knew I had ſet my whole ſoul upon this entertainment; ſhe knew it wanted nothing but the charming collazione I had projected after the ball, to render it perfect; and ſhe was determined to circumvent me! For," continued he almoſt breathleſs, "the alarm is ſo univerſal, that half the company is already departed, and the gardens will ſoon be empty!"

Whilſt he yet ſpoke, whole groups diſappeared; and the ſound of numerous carriages told him he had nothing to hope.

CHAP. XXII.

Now go with me,
Into the chauntry by;
And underneath that conſecrated roof
Plight me the full aſſurance of your faith,
That my moſt jealous and too doubtful ſoul
May henceforth live at peace.

SHAKESPEARE.

ETHELREDA was ſtill in the grotto. The wand of the magician had fixed her to the ſpot where ſhe ſtood: all aſcended the ſtone ſteps, and ſhe remained in the illuminated cavern with Conway, loſt in aſtoniſhment.

"Can you pardon me?" cried he, throwing aſide his maſk, his cap, and wand, and ſeizing Ethelreda's cold hand.

She made no anſwer.

"I am about to put you to the proof!" continued he, ſolemnly, and looking earneſtly at her. "Without heſitating, without evaſion, give me an abſolute right to this hand!"

She was about to ſpeak.

"Hear me!" ſaid Conway, impatiently, "for the ſake of mercy!——In three days I ſail—upon what ſervice I am ignorant; my abſence, I am perſuaded, will be a long one, and my deſtination is ſo ſecret, it is more than probable I ſhall never return!"

The hand that Conway held trembled violently, and became ſtill colder.

"I have taken every precaution," continued he, "provided you do not refuſe me this *laſt* requeſt,

queſt, to have the ceremony performed, as ſecretly as you pleaſe, this very morning, at St. Siffrid's Church. It is now," looking at his watch, "near two!"

"It can never take place, Captain Conway!" ſaid Ethelreda, ſpeaking for the firſt time.

"We part, then, for ever!" ſaid Conway, quitting her hand, and turning to go.

"Stop!" cried ſhe, "Stop one moment! You urge me, Captain Conway, to make a laſting engagement with you, without remembering the light in which I *muſt* have appeared to you at our laſt meeting. You compel me to enter your family, knowing the averſion of your father, though without knowing that he himſelf has intimated it to *me!* You know, too, that I am ſeparated from my ſiſter; that I have not a friend in the world whom I can conſult on an occaſion ſo important. Shall I ſay, too, that a reſolution ſo ſuddenly taken may not be permanent; that it alarms me? becauſe, when laſt we parted—"

"Oh, Ethelreda! *this* from you!—So *coolly* you can diſmiſs me!—You have no friends to conſult?—I would not *bear* to ſee you ſwayed by advice.—If your own heart does not plead for me, tell me ſo, and I relinquiſh you! I require no juſtification of your conduct, I will accept of none—but your conſent. Tell me for the laſt time—Do we part for ever and ever?"

The queſtion, and the manner of it, were too deciſive not to call for an immediate anſwer. Ethelreda's pride and reſolution both gave way, at the thoughts of ſeeing Conway depart for ever, loaded with grief and deſpondency. She heſitated, ſtill without ſpeaking.

Conway perceived her irreſolution; and, once more ſeizing her hand, he exclaimed, in a doubtful

ful kind of rapture, "You do conſent! Let us go this moment——" and he attempted to lead her towards the door of the grotto.

"Oh, Conway!" ſaid ſhe, ſtill lingering behind, "if you had heard your father's converſation—if you had witneſſed what I ſuffered, even when conſcious dignity ſupported me under ſuch humiliations, you would not urge me to ſacrifice the right I ſtill feel to return the ſcorn of your family, by ſubmitting thus to enter it!"

"You will not, you cannot involve me! You *were* too juſt, too candid once, to puniſh me for my misfortunes!" ſaid Conway paſſionately.

"If you felt the preſages that I do, you would not wiſh to extort from me this fatal conſent!" ſaid Ethelreda, in the moſt melancholy tone.

"I *hoped* it would have been voluntary," ſaid Conway, with extreme ſolemnity, "that, in quitting this country, I might have had a wiſh to return to it again, if ſuch had been my fate; yet I feel that I can derive no comfort from your compliance if it make you unhappy. Once more, farewell!—My hours are reckoned. This is the laſt I have to ſpend with you!"

"Oh, no! not by many! many!" exclaimed Ethelreda. "I conſent to your propoſals, as much for my own ſake as for yours!"——quite overcome by the deſpondency of Conway's manner.

"Then let us not loſe a moment!" eagerly uttered Conway: "another day I *cannot* diſpoſe of, though my life depended on it!"—fearful leſt ſhe ſhould again waver in her reſolution ſo haſtily taken.

"Not unconditionally," reſumed Ethelreda. "Remember, we part the moment the ceremony is performed; and if the time ſhould be length-

ened

ened before you ſail, I forbid *any* attempt to ſee me in the interim."

Ethelreda's manner was as deciſive as Conway's had been; he ſaw it was in vain to alter her determination; he therefore thankfully ſubſcribed to her terms. "You will allow me to write to you?" ſaid he.

"Not whilſt you remain in England; ſince I would not for the univerſe raiſe a ſuſpicion of our connection."

All Conway's objections to this laſt arrangement were fruitleſs; and obſerving he only loſt time in his perſuaſions, he gave up the point.

They walked haſtily through the motley crew that ſpread over the gardens, without ſuffering the tumult, which did not eſcape their notice, to intereſt their curioſity, or to delay them one ſingle moment: a chaiſe waited for them, into which Conway lifted Ethelreda, whoſe apprehenſions had deprived her of all ſtrength. They drove furiouſly; outſtripping moſt of the carriages on the road; which, from that circumſtance, and the flambeaux and moons that accompanied them, looked more like the populous ſtreet of a city.

The old vicar of the village of St. Siffrid, and domeſtic chaplain at the Caſtle, for more than twelve months had been incapable of performing his parochial functions. And the Strathener chaplain, who was ſure to poſſeſs the living, in the gift of Sir Francis L'Eſterling, after the death of the preſent incumbent, officiated for him. The Rev. Mr. Morgan had been applied to by Conway to read the marriage ſervice; but as he was one of thoſe men who are ſubject to the influence of bribes, he was obliged to engage him in his intereſt by depoſiting a ſum the ſtraitened ſtate of his finances could ill ſpare; the avarice of his father

ther effectually preventing Conway from ever being over-ſtocked with money; which, joined to the profuſeneſs of his own diſpoſition, ſometimes involved him in difficulties.

It was near five o'clock when the chaiſe approached St. Siffrid's Caſtle; and Conway now recollected, for the firſt time, he had provided no witneſſes! Trembling with apprehenſion, leſt ſhe ſhould avail herſelf of his omiſſion, and his inability to procure any, Conway mentioned the circumſtance to Ethelreda, entreating her at the ſame time, not to recall her conſent.

"You do not imagine, I hope, ſir," ſaid ſhe, with ſome indignation, "that I have ſo little ſteadineſs, *now* to recede, by taking advantage of your overſight? Oh, Captain Conway!" ſaid ſhe, obſerving he was diſtreſſed at her manner,—"why ſhould I heſitate to confeſs, that, were we otherwiſe circumſtanced, this union would give me inexpreſſible happineſs? But you are ſupplicating for a bride who has nothing but herſelf to beſtow; who, by her compliance, brings upon you the diſpleaſure of your family; without fortune, even without the conſequence that the name of L'Eſterling would have given her; and but lately releaſed from the bonds of an unfortunate marriage."

"Tell me not of myſelf!" ſaid Conway, impatiently. "What have I to offer in return for the treaſure I am ſoliciting? You only remind me of my own unworthineſs; and that I have no claims to your favour, but the ſincerity and fervour, with which I entreat for it. Even my profeſſion," continued he, "affords me no proſpect of independence, till I am too old to value it."

"I myſelf," ſaid Ethelreda, who read his ſuſpicions and reproaches in his countenance, "I will

will procure witneſſes, whoſe fidelity I can rely upon!" Conway had no time to expreſs his thanks, before the chaiſe ſtopped; it was ſettled he ſhould meet Ethelreda at a little door in the Caſtle gardens, nearly oppoſite the Church. For, though Conway procured a ſpecial licence, the impoſſibility of his retreating unobſerved from the Caſtle, amidſt the number of gueſts that were expected there, made it abſolutely neceſſary to perform the ceremony in the Church.

It was Llewellyn who opened the door of the carriage for Ethelreda; and as ſhe walked into the hall, he told her that Captain Conway had been there the preceding day; and then gave her a letter, which ſhe put into her pocket without looking at it. It was ſtill dark, and Ethelreda followed Llewellyn, who walked before her with a light, till ſhe came to the ſtairs. She ſtopped, and ſaid, "Llewellyn, is your wife ſtill up?"

"She waited up for you, madam, and the company," ſaid Llewellyn; alluding to Sir Francis's gueſts.

"Call her inſtantly;" ſaid ſhe, dreading ſome of them would arrive. Llewellyn did as he was ordered.

"Llewellyn, and you, Winifred," ſaid Ethelreda, "you were faithful ſervants of my father—can I depend upon your fidelity to me, his daughter?" The queſtion, which half implied a doubt, brought tears into the eyes of each.

"I aſk no promiſes," ſaid Ethelreda——"a Welchman keeps his word without them!" Llewellyn ſmiled. "Go on, Llewellyn, to the little poſtern in the myrtle garden——you have the keys?"

"I muſt get a lanthorn then," ſaid Llewellyn, "for it is ſtill dark; and within the laſt half-hour it has come on to rain and blow."

It did indeed blow violently; and Ethelreda, as ſhe deſcended the ſteps of the terraces, was obliged to hold by Winifred, to keep her footing, as ſhe trembling followed the light of Llewellyn's lanthorn. At the gate waited Conway.

"What a terrible morning is this for you to be out!" ſaid he, "and without a cloak, too! Your gown is quite wet! you will take cold!—I ſhall kill you!——Take my coat!" cried he, with all the vehemence and gallantry of his diſpoſition; and at the ſame time preparing to take it off.

"And what are you to do without one?" ſaid Ethelreda, ſmiling at his want of conſideration. "Fear nothing for me—my health is ſtronger than my mind. Perhaps you have forgotten that I am uſed to ſuch adventures? You do not recollect that terrible cave?"

It was but to croſs a ſmall church-yard, from the Caſtle gardens to the Church porch; and whilſt they were yet ſpeaking, Ethelreda found herſelf almoſt at the altar. She trembled, and wiſhed to recede; but ſhe had too much preſence of mind to irritate Conway by an appearance of regret. She walked ſteadily up the ſteps of the chancel, to the communion-table; Mr. Morgan waited for them; he took out his book, and, by the dim light of a candle, read with haſte, ſtammering, and heſitation, the ſolemn ſervice of marriage.

It was not till Conway attempted to put the ring on her finger, that Ethelreda perceived that of her firſt marriage: ſhe took it off haſtily, and placed it on the rail of the communion-table; and this little circumſtance ſerved to complete the diſorder of her ſpirits, and add to her depreſſion. She looked round the Church with horror; by turns fixing her eyes on the marble effigy of her father,

father, and on the two ſervants, who ſtill wore his mourning. Never did a marriage wear ſo much the air of a funeral. No joy, no congratulation; darkneſs and ſilence, only interrupted by the beating rain and howling of the wind, were the gloomy attendants on this melancholy ceremony. All Ethelreda's hopes ſunk under ſuch inauſpicious omens. In vain Conway tried to re-aſſure her drooping ſpirits. She repeated inceſſantly, as they deſcended the ſteps, that "ſhe had deſtroyed his future proſpects, and had involved him in her own unrelenting deſtiny."

At the little poſtern they parted. Conway drew his hat over his eyes as he quitted Ethelreda's hand: he walked on ſome paces with his eyes fixed on the ground. The locking of the Church door, as he paſſed it, made him raiſe them. He perceived that he had been watched.——The grey dawn clearly ſhewed him the perſon of a man, but not his features; the form, however, haſtily retreated, as Conway advanced, and was preſently loſt to his ſight, in the wood by the ſide of the Church-yard. Conway rejoiced this unpleaſant occurrence was unknown to Ethelreda; in thinking of whom, he ſtepped into the chaiſe which waited for him, and with incredible expedition returned to London.

When Ethelreda ſaw Conway depart, a fooliſh foreboding that their ill-omened union would prove unfortunate, and a kind of perſuaſion they ſhould never meet again. made her ſo faint and weak, joined to the fatigue of the preceding evening and night, together with the poor ſtate of her health, that it was with extreme difficulty the two ſervants ſupported her up the ſteps of the garden, as far as the little tower that defended the entrance into the great hall. Here the ſound of voices deterred her from proceeding, and ſhe ſtood

ſhivering

ſhivering in the air, and quite wetted with rain, in hopes they would depart. She liſtened attentively, and plainly diſcovered, from the ſtrange voices, that her allotment of Sir Francis's viſitors were arrived. Amongſt them, by his foreign accent, ſhe plainly heard De Clerac giving orders to the Caſtle ſervants in broken Engliſh, and ſwearing in French, that his own valet had taken the road to Strathener Caſtle, whilſt he, by miſtake, had accompanied ſome ſtrangers to St. Siffrid's.

In vain Ethelreda waited for them to leave the hall. Some declared they would not go to bed; ſome abuſed the bad weather, which prevented them from going ſhooting, as they intended; and all talked of Lady Mariamne, whoſe bad temper they reprobated; whilſt others laughed at the expenſive folly of Sir Francis, and ridiculed the gala, that had given them ſo much entertainment.

Llewellyn and Winifred both urged her to go in; but there was no other entrance to the Caſtle from the gardens; and whilſt ſhe ſtood debating whether ſhe ſhould wait their removal, or walk through the hall undiſmayed, ſhe heard De Clerac ſay, "He would once more look at the weather, and then go to bed." He came towards the tower, as the neareſt door, and ſaw her inſtantly.

"Ha, ha! la belle matinée pour une promenade!" cried he; "Ill y faut de myſtère là-deſſous!" and he laughed violently, as he followed Ethelreda into the hall, who made him no anſwer.

The group was indeed a whimſical one, before the Count joined it: old Llewellyn with his lanthorn: Winifred, with a ſcarlet cloth mantle thrown over her ſhoulders; and Ethelreda's feathers quite wetted, and falling on different ſides over the edge of her hat. The Count followed them,

them, glittering in the habit of Atar in the French opera, repeating, with many geſtures,

"*Mon Irza, plus fraiche que la roſe, &c.*"

Notwithſtanding Ethelreda's perturbation, the ſmile of aſtoniſhment on the faces of her gueſts did not eſcape her. At any other time ſhe could have joined in their mirth; but now her thoughts were too entirely taken up with Conway. It was with extreme difficulty ſhe walked through them unſupported; ſaying, as ſhe quitted the hall, with an inclination of the head, "Llewellyn, ſhew the gentlemen their apartments."

Ethelreda's appearance had given a new turn to their converſation, and they only ſeparated to prepare for breakfaſt.

CHAP. XXIII.

Poor is the love, that rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity, can bear to ſee
The man whoſe heart was once ſo dear to thine
By many a tender vow ſo mix'd together,
A prey to anguiſh, fury, and diſtraction!

THOMSON.

IT was not to reſt, that Ethelreda was impatient to reach her own room. It was to think of Conway, and to revolve in her mind every thing that had paſſed within the laſt few hours. Only to

to blame herſelf, ſhe recapitulated all Conway's arguments; and, thus diſpoſed to find fault with her own conduct, ſhe found them weak and unconvincing; the ebullitions of paſſion, not the ſuggeſtions of reaſon. And the compaſſion that had influenced her to comply with his propoſal, in the ſeverity of condemning herſelf, ſhe called ſelfiſhneſs and imbecility. But more than all ſhe was perplexed in what way or in what words to convey the knowledge of her new engagement to her ſiſter and Mr. Harwood. All her but half-ſubdued pride returned at the mortifying idea, a clandeſtine marriage!——and clandeſtine *only* becauſe the father of her huſband had forbidden the connection! Ethelreda bluſhed for herſelf, and for the degraded name of L'Eſterling; ſhe bluſhed for Conway, who could humiliate the woman he profeſſed to love!——"Yes, whom he *profeſſed* to love!" ſaid ſhe, ſpeaking aloud. without intending it. Ethelreda forgot for a moment, that in hazarding every thing Conway had gone farther than profeſſions; but if Ethelreda had a foible, ſhe inherited it from her father—it was the pride of family.

It was this foible, joined to her misfortunes, that ſometimes made Ethelreda tenacious of reſpect, and miſconſtrue ignorance or omiſſion into affronts, that were not intended as ſuch. If Ethelreda blamed Conway for a moment, ſhe as ſpeedily owned her injuſtice; and the momentary diſpleaſure ſhe felt againſt him made it recoil with additional reproaches on herſelf. "It is I alone," ſaid ſhe, "that have acted unworthily!—when I ſuffered his entreaties, and thoſe of my own heart, to prevail, contrary to his intereſts, contrary to the ſuggeſtions of my own dignity, and regardleſs of the honour of my hitherto unblemiſhed name." Ethelreda felt at that time as if the ſpirit of her

anceſtors

anceſtors had deſerted her; ſhe ſaw herſelf, with all the romantic pride of her father, or rather ſhe fancied herſelf, the firſt degenerate branch of the name of L'Eſterling. She looked back retroſpectively for all the centuries her family had exiſted: not one had tarniſhed its glory by a mean or an unworthy action: at leaſt ſo it appeared to Ethelreda; for her father had often proudly boaſted of the unſullied honour of his anceſtors. She bluſhed deeply when ſhe beheld herſelf the firſt who had thrown a ſhade upon them; and ſo deep was her vexation, that it produced tears.

It was long before her paſſion and pride ſuffered her to grow calm; and then the remembrance of Conway returned, and with it the recollection of the letter Llewellyn had given her. It was not becauſe it came from Conway ſhe opened it —ſhe had no idea it was from him; it was merely to take off her thoughts from the ſubject that harraſſed her; it was from diſtraction, partly, and partly from reſtleſſneſs.

She began to read it, however; and without turning to the ſignature, ſhe knew it to be from Conway, who, actuated by his paſſion, began, without any preamble, the ſubject that occupied all his thoughts. He aſked no pardon for his abruptneſs; he required no juſtification of that cruel ſcene which had driven him almoſt to deſperation. He ſimply related the circumſtances that had taken him ſo haſtily from Strathener; and then, in terms ſo humble, entreated her forgiveneſs of the propoſals he was about to make, that whilſt ſhe read them Ethelreda ceaſed to repent her lamented compliance. "Pardon my temerity," ſaid Conway; "I feel ſenſibly that my propoſals degrade you and mortify me; but do not imagine I wiſh you to accede to my terms; it is I who am determined to agree to yours. If your

your dignity revolts againſt a private union, and I know it will, I entreat, I ſupplicate you, to accept me openly. There is nothing I would not forego to obtain you. There is no hazard to which I would not *thankfully* expoſe *myſelf* to ſpare you the ſlighteſt mortification."

Such a declaration was ſufficient to work upon the ſenſible heart of Ethelreda, and ſhe became more reconciled to the ſtep ſhe had taken; though ſhe ſtill called her condeſcenſion blameable, becauſe it was more inimical to Conway's intereſts than to her own. Perhaps ſhe was more compoſed, becauſe ſhe had taken the reſolution to keep their marriage a ſecret even from her ſiſter; and when ſome fortunate revolution in their affairs enabled them publicly to avow their engagements, ſhe thought to deceive the world by repeating the forms publicly. With ſuch ſophiſtic reaſoning Ethelreda impoſed on her own underſtanding, and at breakfaſt ſhe met her gueſts with tolerable ſerenity.

For ſeveral days longer than they intended, the whole company was obliged to remain in the Caſtle, owing to the badneſs of the weather, and the overflowing of a little river, that had laid part of the road under water. Ethelreda at firſt lamented that the elements had conſpired with her deſtiny to torment her. But ſhe provided the gentlemen with cards, dice, and cheſs-tables; to the ladies ſhe diſtributed muſic, and drawing-implements; and entertained them with her converſation as well as ſhe could; and conſidering ſhe ſcarcely knew the names of ſome, ſhe ſucceeded tolerably, both in amuſing them and in diverting herſelf. In ſhort, ſhe was *almoſt* ſorry when they departed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Diis carus ipſis: quippe ter & quater
Anno reviſens æquor Atlanticum
Impune———

HORAT. lib. 1, ode xxxi.

THOUGH Conway returned to London much happier than he left it, he was ſtill not happy; but he was more at eaſe; he was ſatisfied of Ethelreda's truth; he had no longer any fears of loſing her. But ſtill, the uncertainty that hung over his fate depreſſed his ſpirits; and the idea, that in whatever misfortunes were reſerved for him ſhe was involved, prevented him from recovering his natural cheerfulneſs.

The limited number of days were more than expired, and ſtill his ſtay was prolonged; and he waited in anxiety the mandate that was to ſeparate him from Ethelreda, perhaps for years—perhaps for ever! Another week paſſed away: Conway was a thouſand times on the point of infringing the treaty, by writing to Ethelreda: but he feared incurring her diſpleaſure; and particularly he wiſhed to avoid any appearance of having impoſed on her by a falſe ſtatement of the time of his departure; of which his repeated delays made him dread more and more the imputation.

Mr. Conway had been in town above three weeks, without having met his ſon, or without knowing how he had diſpoſed of himſelf; or, indeed, without knowing Captain Conway's deſtination was ſo materially changed. This circumſtance, apparently ſo extraordinary, is, however, eaſily

eaſily accounted for. When the family was not in town, Conway always went to lodgings, wherever it beſt ſuited his convenience; and the wide difference in their purſuits ſeldom procured them any accidental meetings. Mr. Conway was at his own houſe, in Portman Square, where Captain Conway had not once been ſince he quitted Strathener Caſtle; and Mr. Conway, totally unappriſed and unſuſpicious of his ſon's abode in London, had written repeatedly to Portſmouth; imagining, as Conway's frigate lay at Spithead, he was there waiting ſailing-orders. It was merely by chance they met at laſt; for, as Mr. Conway was going through Pall-mall, ruminating on his own projects and his ſon's ſilence, his cogitations were interrupted by the ſhutting of a door, out of which Conway had juſt iſſued. "Captain Conway!" cried he. Conway turned inſtantly.

"If you have no engagements for this morning that will interfere, I ſhould be glad, ſir, of an hour's converſation with you."

"Any engagement of mine, ſir, ſhall give place to you," ſaid Conway, who, following the example of his father's over-acted politeneſs, was determined not to be behind hand with him in compliments. Conway knew that when *he* was calm, his father always loſt his temper. From his countenance and manner he augured badly; he therefore armed himſelf with civility and good-manners; and after a few more ceremonious apologies from Mr. Conway, *as* ceremoniouſly returned by his ſon, they retired to Conway's lodging's.

Mr. Conway knew not exactly how to begin; at laſt he ſaid: "You are *ſtill* in town, Captain Conway!"

"I am, ſir."

"And

"And when do you ſail, ſir?"

"That is a queſtion I cannot anſwer; I was going to the Admiralty when I had the pleaſure of meeting you."

"Don't call it *pleaſure*, ſir! You look diſappointed, and angry."

"You miſtake me entirely, ſir," ſaid Conway; ſtill perfectly calm. "This meeting ſpares me the trouble of writing to you; my attendance here has forbidden all thoughts of a journey to Strathener; I am ordered to join a ſquadron upon ſecret ſervice. I intended writing to my mother," continued he, "that I might ſee her before my departure for Portſmouth, if in the mean time I do not receive poſitive orders to go on board."

"For *Channel* ſervice, you *mean*, ſir! Why, Conway, do you think to impoſe on *me?* Do you imagine I cannot ſee through *any* artifice of yours? You are now this moment projecting a viſit to St. Siffrid's Caſtle!

"You are miſleading yourſelf ſtrangely, ſir!" ſaid Conway. "I thought," continued he, "that you knew me ſuperior to artifice; I am *not* going to St. Siffrid's. Why ſhould I?"

The queſtion was admirably well-timed; for Mr. Conway had no anſwer ready. "Why," ſaid he, heſitating—"I thought—I imagined—I concluded you had broken with—Mrs. Carloville. Indeed, ſhe herſelf diſclaims any intereſt or any concern with you."

Mr. Conway was perplexed. It was the firſt time he had ever mentioned Mrs. Carloville to his ſon; and had done exactly what he wiſhed to have avoided! It was too late to retract—he was ſilent.—He took two or three turns acroſs the room, whilſt Conway muſed upon his father's ſpeech; and it appeared to him, for the firſt time, he

he had advanced more than he could prove. He looked at his father two or three times; and an unpleaſant ſenſation he did not wiſh to define, kept him ſilent.

"What is this you have been telling me about ſailing-orders, Conway?" ſaid Mr. Conway, at laſt.

"I have been ſaying, ſir, what you unfortunately do not chooſe to believe: that my deſtined ſervice in the Channel is exchanged for ſome other—I know not what—" ſaid Conway patiently.

"It is very unaccountable!—very ſingular!—very ſtrange!——Nothing can be more remote—more oppoſite to my intentions—When I ſolicited——" He was going on to make diſcoveries, when he recollected himſelf: "I believe I have ſufficient intereſt to procure you ſome other ſervice, Conway, provided you will promiſe to comply with ſomething I have to requeſt of you?"

"It is quite equal to me," replied Conway: "and I had rather you gave yourſelf no trouble on that ſcore."

"But it is not equal to *me*, ſir! cried Mr. Conway, enraged at his coolneſs and indifference. "Anſwer me plainly—Will you comply—or will you not?—I demand a categorical anſwer."

"You muſt firſt propoſe your terms, ſir," calmly anſwered Conway.

"You know well enough what they are!" cried his father, ſtill more exaſperated.

"If they relate to Lady Octavia Conway, I have long *decided:* the conduct of the Lady herſelf evinces it plainly."

"You are deviating from the truth, ſir! Her conduct evinces nothing—ſhe is under no engagements to the Count de Clerac-Auxerre!" ſaid

ſaid Mr Conway, concluding his ſon alluded to him.

"I know nothing of Lady Octavia's engagements," ſaid Conway: "whatever they are, they will never interfere with mine."

"If you hope any thing from Mrs. Carloville, you are deceived: ſhe diſowns all preference for you: ſhe diſclaims all intereſt in your proceedings: and other preferences——other engagements——" Mr. Conway ſtopped: he felt he had gone too far; and that he had entirely perverted the ſenſe of what Ethelreda had ſaid in her converſation with him.

"You are perfectly right to ſtop there, ſir," ſaid Conway, rather irritated at what he knew to be a downright falſehood: "you have already ſaid more than you can anſwer, I believe!"

Had not Mr. Conway been conſcious he prevaricated, ſuch a ſpeech from his ſon would have drawn on him his laſting diſpleaſure; but he was ſenſible of his own deviation from truth, and inwardly acknowledged his ſon's ſuperiority. "I will give you a day or two to conſider of my terms, ſir," ſaid he, going towards the door.

"In the mean time I ſhall be half way on the other ſide of the globe, perhaps!" ſaid Conway.

"And perhaps not," ſaid his father, as he ſhut the room-door after him, leaving Conway in exactly the ſame diſpoſition as when he entered; namely, inclined to think of nothing but Ethelreda.

Many days elapſed, and Conway heard nothing from his father—neither on the ſubject of his departure. Days at laſt amounted to weeks; and nearly a month was completed, which Conway paſſed in the moſt irritating ſtate of uncertainty.

CHAP.

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"You muſt firſt propoſe your terms, ſir," calmly anſwered Conway.

"You know well enough what they are!" cried his father, ſtill more exaſperated.

"If they relate to Lady Octavia Conway, I have long *decided*: the conduct of the Lady herſelf evinces it plainly."

"You are deviating from the truth, ſir! Her conduct evinces nothing—ſhe is under no engagements to the Count de Clerac-Auxerre!" ſaid

ſaid Mr Conway, concluding his ſon alluded to him.

"I know nothing of Lady Octavia's engagements," ſaid Conway: "whatever they are, they will never interfere with mine."

"If you hope any thing from Mrs. Carloville, you are deceived: ſhe diſowns all preference for you: ſhe diſclaims all intereſt in your proceedings: and other preferences——other engagements——" Mr. Conway ſtopped: he felt he had gone too far; and that he had entirely perverted the ſenſe of what Ethelreda had ſaid in her converſation with him.

"You are perfectly right to ſtop there, ſir," ſaid Conway, rather irritated at what he knew to be a downright falſehood: "you have already ſaid more than you can anſwer, I believe!"

Had not Mr. Conway been conſcious he prevaricated, ſuch a ſpeech from his ſon would have drawn on him his laſting diſpleaſure; but he was ſenſible of his own deviation from truth, and inwardly acknowledged his ſon's ſuperiority. "I will give you a day or two to conſider of my terms, ſir," ſaid he, going towards the door.

"In the mean time I ſhall be half way on the other ſide of the globe, perhaps!" ſaid Conway.

"And perhaps not," ſaid his father, as he ſhut the room-door after him, leaving Conway in exactly the ſame diſpoſition as when he entered; namely, inclined to think of nothing but Ethelreda.

Many days elapſed, and Conway heard nothing from his father—neither on the ſubject of his departure. Days at laſt amounted to weeks; and nearly a month was completed, which Conway paſſed in the moſt irritating ſtate of uncertainty.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

Oh world, how apt the poor are to be proud!
SHAKESPEARE.

IT was paſt the equinox, and the bad weather that uſually accompanies the ſun's paſſing the line, filled Ethelreda with dread and apprehenſions. It was October, and yet the violent ſtorms of wind, rain, and thunder had not abated. Such tempeſtuous weather forbade all intercourſe in the neighbourhood. The roads, torn and deſtroyed by the rain, looked the beds of torrents, and were totally unſafe for carriages. Ethelreda was entirely prevented walking; her own talents were her only reſources; and from a conſtant repetition of the ſame exerciſes, thoſe at laſt grew tireſome, becauſe the mind was not engaged in them. Ethelreda, ſick of her ſolitude, repined inceſſantly at the bad weather, and trembled at every guſt of wind, which diſturbed her terrified imagination with dreams of death, and ſhipwrecks, and Conway. Her troubles had lately been much increaſed by the contradictory letters ſhe received from Harwood; for her ſiſter wrote to her but ſeldom. Sometimes he would give her reaſon to hope her ſiſter's health was mending hourly: —the next poſt would bring an account of ſymptoms that foreboded a rapid diſſolution. In fact, Harwood's ſpirits exhilarated by his hopes, or depreſſed by his apprehenſions, he wrote accordingly, without conſidering how ſeriouſly he alarmed Ethelreda.

With

With tranſport Ethelreda at laſt ſaw ſome probability of the weather changing. The ſun ſhone dim and watry through the clouds; yet ſhe ordered her horſe, and determined to pay Mrs. Conway a viſit at Strathener; which the violent rains had long prevented her from doing. As ſhe approached the Caſtle, the firſt object that ſtruck her was the north tower diveſted of its flag. She turned, quite overwhelmed with diſappointment; but ſhe had been ſeen from the Caſtle, and one of the ſervants ran out to know her commands. Ethelreda wanted not to aſk any queſtions; but the ſervant approached, and waited for her to ſpeak.

"When did your lord's family depart?" ſaid ſhe.

"His lordſhip, and my Lord Caerleon, with Lady Octavia, and Miſs Beralſton, ſet off this morning, madam."

"And Mrs. Conway?"

"Mrs. Conway, madam, has been gone theſe three weeks."

"Alone?"

"Yes, madam, alone."

Ethelreda was very ſorry, and much ſurpriſed, at the precipitate departure of the Strathener family: not that ſhe cared for any of *them*; but ſhe hoped to have had the pleaſure of Mrs. Conway's company at intervals, till ſhe received Mr. Harwood's ſummons to meet her ſiſter in London; and beſides, too, ſhe had long been trying to procure herſelf a private converſation with Miſs Beralſton, who lately had evidently ſhunned her. She wa smortified too at the manner, in regard to her, in which the whole ſet had left the country; none of whom ſhe pardoned but Mrs. Conway, whom ſhe knew too ſincere in her attachment, and too elegantly polite in her manners, to treat

any

any one with ſtudied neglect—laſt of all herſelf.

Two formal cards, from Lady Octavia and Miſs Beralſton, were put into Ethelreda's hand when ſhe returned to St. Siffrid's. Both lamented, in exactly the ſame terms, that the ſtate of the roads obliged them to take their leave by meſſage rather than in perſon; and both hoped to have the pleaſure of meeting Mrs. Carloville in London. Ethelreda threw them on a table haſtily; ſhe was vexed to ſee that Miſs Beralſton ſo cloſely copied the diſagreeable example of Lady Octavia. And not till then did ſhe perceive a large parcel directed to her, and ſealed with black. For ſome moments ſhe did not venture to look at the impreſſion: at laſt, trembling with apprehenſion, ſhe examined the arms: they were neither Harwood's nor Conway's. She was relieved, but very much bewildered: *without* the coronet and ſupporters, the eſcutcheon was not unknown to her: ſhe broke it precipitately.

The envelope contained a letter, and the copy of a will.

"It is a legacy!" exclaimed Ethelreda. For further information, ſhe applied to the letter. It was ſigned "Carloville." She turned to the will. The will was ſigned "Carloville."

Ethelreda had now no fears for Conway or her ſiſter; ſhe perceived it concerned only herſelf, and all her terrors ſubſided into calmneſs; but her aſtoniſhment remained in full force, or rather increaſed, on reading the letter. It ran thus: "That though Mr. Carloville had in his lifetime forfeited every claim or hope of any part of the fortune of the late Lord Carloville, but ſuch of the eſtates as were unalienable from the title (both of which had devolved to the brother of the deceaſed, the ſecond ſon of the late lord, and the writer

writer of the letter); and though the terms on which the late Mr. Carloville ſtood with his family were ſuppoſed to be univerſally known; yet the deceaſed Lord Carloville, who only waited to receive ſome intimation of the relationſhip from his daughter-in-law's family, to acknowledge the connection during his life, had waved this neglect in his will, and had bequeathed her (not as the widow of his ſon, whom he diſowned, but as connected with his family) twenty thouſand pounds, and his houſe and furniture in Groſvenor-Square, for ever." The letter referred her to a copy of the will, in a codicil to which the bequeſt was mentioned; and at the houſe in Groſvenor-Square ſhe was appointed to receive the legacy the firſt week in December, from Lord Carloville's agent. The letter concluded formally and reſpectfully, and was ſigned by Lord Carloville, though manifeſtly written by an agent, or an attorney.

There was a want of kindneſs in this laſt circumſtance, that did not eſcape the tenacious ſpirit of Ethelreda. "What kind of opinion is it they have formed of me?" ſaid ſhe, apoſtrophiſing herſelf aloud with indignation. "This could never have been meant as a kindneſs; there is ſomething too offenſive in the manner!—They charge me too with never having made myſelf known to them!—Either I have been ſtrangely deceived, or they have treated me with the moſt pointed neglect!" The firſt impulſe, that actuated her to refuſe this legacy, prompted her to write to Lord Carloville; but upon maturer conſideration ſhe determined to tranſact every thing with his lordſhip's agent; and by that means avoid all preſent or future diſcuſſion with any of the name of Carloville. In a few days her preſence would be neceſſary in London, to fulfil

the appointment. Accordingly, every arrangement was made for her departure, when ſhe received a moſt alarming letter from Harwood: he entreated her to follow him immediately to Falmouth, with his children, and their ſervants; to loſe no time in preparations; adding he was going with Mrs. Harwood to Liſbon.

The ſummons perplexed Ethelreda; for ſhe knew not how to obey it immediately; ſhe thought it impoſſible to put off her own buſineſs in town: ſhe therefore departed from St. Siffrid's Caſtle on the 27th of October, in order to be as early as poſſible in London, accompanied by the children and their ſuite; leaving Llewellyn and his wife to ſuperintend the domeſtic affairs of the Caſtle the very ſhort time longer they were to remain there. In the hurry and confuſion in which Ethelreda read this letter, ſhe almoſt overlooked a poſtſcript, in which Harwood informed her he had given up the Caſtle to Sir Francis L'Eſterling, who would have it in his power to appoint a new tenant by the 25th of December. To the care of Llewellyn and his wife he committed the charge of removing whatever belonged to his family on the premiſes; requeſting Ethelreda to diſcharge all the ſervants that had been hired ſince the death of Sir Roger. For the others, he aſſigned them the ſame poſts in his own eſtabliſhment at Harwood-hall, whither they were ordered to precede the arrival of Llewellyn and Winifred.

For the firſt time in her life, Ethelreda quitted Wales; and on the firſt of December arrived in London. Her journey, on account of the children, and the danger of croſſing the Severn, had been uncommonly tedious.

Before Ethelreda reached London, it was almoſt dark; when ſhe recollected that no houſe or lodging

ing was provided for the reception of herſelf and the children; for it was by no means her intention to take poſſeſſion, though but for a day, of that of the late Lord Carloville. Totally ignorant of the ways of London; timid, and averſe to going to a hotel; unprotected but by ſervants; and without a proper recommendation; in this dilemma, when the poſtillions aſked whither they were to drive, Ethelreda made no anſwer; for, in effect, ſhe knew not what to ſay. She heſitated a few moments: at laſt, "Drive to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's, in Upper Harley-ſtreet," ſaid ſhe: and ſhe had no ſooner given the order, than ſhe repented it; as ſhe had originally intended to make her viſit to town a ſecret. She ſtopped at the door, however, and ſaw it ſurrounded by chairs and carriages. Ethelreda, in the mean time, had reſolved not to accept of accommodations in the houſe, were they to offer them; but merely to aſk a recommendation to a lodging.

A ſervant approached the chaiſe—"Is your lady at home?" aſked Ethelreda. The man had been lately hired; he ſtared, but made no anſwer. "Is your *lady* at home?" ſhe repeated. Another ſervant anſwered her, "My maſter and her ladyſhip have ſeparate houſes, Madam;" and walked away. "It is true," ſaid ſhe, recollecting the night of the gala: "Tell Sir Francis I ſhould be glad to ſpeak to him for a moment."

At that inſtant Lord Caerleon ſtepped out of a vis-à-vis at the door. He knew Mrs. Carloville's voice. He ſprang towards the carriage, and ſeizing her hand, in which ſhe held a card for the ſervant to take her name, exclaimed aloud that he was rejoiced to ſee her. Ethelreda ſtruggled to releaſe her hand. "Nay," ſaid Caerleon, "not unleſs you tell me whither you are going."

The ſervant ſtill waited for her name.—"I will deliver your meſſage to my maſter, madam; am I to take your direction?" "No, no," ſaid Ethelreda, ſtill trying to withdraw her hand; "tell him, I wiſh to ſpeak to him now, directly."

"Your name, madam?"

"Tell Sir Francis, a relation wiſhes to ſpeak to him."

Ethelreda felt a kind of repugnance to calling herſelf Carloville; but obſerving, with the kind of inſolence that ſometimes belongs to the ſervants in great houſes, he did not chooſe to give her meſſage without her name: "Say, it is Mrs Carloville."

"Go ſir, inſtantly!" ſaid Caerleon, in his voice of authority, at the ſame time giving him the card from her hand. "But not this inſtant, either; for then *you* will be gone," addreſſing Mrs. Carloville.

As the man ſtepped into the hall, Ethelreda heard him laugh aloud. She was ſhocked and mortified beyond meaſure. He returned with a pretended excuſe from Sir Francis, that he was juſt ſitting down to dinner; concluding, perhaps, that Lord Caerleon had meant to give him ſome ſuch hint.

"I meet with nothing but inſults!" ſaid Ethelreda in deſpair. She thought herſelf abandoned and deſerted by all on whom ſhe had any claims. Caerleon ſtill held her hand, of which ſhe was unconſcious, whilſt ſhe revolved in her mind how to determine. She knew no alternative, and with an aching heart told the poſtillions to drive to Groſvenor-ſquare. When the chaiſe moved, Ethelreda perceived Caerleon had continued to hold her hand: ſhe was ſilent, however; for he had already terrified and expoſed her

her. What then were her feelings, joined to the agitation of her ſpirits, when, turning her head to ſee if the children followed her into the drawing-room, ſhe perceived Lord Caerleon ſo near her that he entered the room at the ſame moment!

Ethelreda, too much overpowered by her ſenſations to ſpeak or to object to Lord Caerleon's entrance, dropped upon a ſopha, unable to ſupport herſelf, and burſt into tears. Lord Caerleon at that moment entirely forgot his engagements with Miſs Beralſton. His attachment to Mrs. Carloville, though, like his other attachments, ſubject to numberleſs changes, was in effect the only trait in his character that was not affected. To this ſentiment Lord Caerleon owed the correction of a thouſand fopperies, which he perceived were deſpiſed by Ethelreda; and it was from her unintentional influence that Caerleon was become almoſt a reaſonable being.

He was affected at ſight of her tears, yet was too ſelfiſh to leave her, though he plainly perceived it was his intruſion that occaſioned them: he threw himſelf on his knees, and ſeizing both Ethelreda's hands, entreated her to pardon him. "And yet," cried he, with a tone and countenance of mortified vanity, "in Conway it is no crime to follow you, to love you, and even to tell you ſo!"

Such an exclamation was not calculated to relieve Ethelreda's diſtreſs, but rather to increaſe it. She made him no anſwer. He continued kneeling at her feet; and he might have kneeled for ever, but the ſound of a voice ſpeaking to the ſervants, and the ſudden apparition of Conway, petrified yet rouſed her. She roſe inſtantly, and, diſengaging herſelf from Caerleon, ſprung towards Conway. Expeditious as ſhe was, Conway was already

already out of her reach. He called to Lord Caerleon to follow him, and retreated inſtantly.

Joined to the aſtoniſhment that diſtracted Ethelreda at the ſight of Conway ſo unexpectedly, at a moment when, from his long ſilence, ſhe believed him exiſting in another hemiſphere; the idea of his meeting Caerleon was too terrible. Caerleon, determined to clear her, followed him rapidly: Ethelreda tried to ſtop him; but ſtrength and utterance both failed her, and ſhe fell ſenſeleſs at the door.

To the ſervants who were aſſiſting in carrying in the baggage, the whole was a myſtery. Her own maid, who had formerly lived in town with Lady Octavia, in terror and confuſion fled acroſs the ſquare to Lord Trecaſtle's houſe, not knowing what ſhe did, or that ſhe could be of any ſervice. The door was open; and in the hall ſhe interrupted the progreſs of Lady Octavia, who, magnificently dreſſed was juſt going out. "My miſtreſs is dying!"——cried the woman out of breath.

"Well! Who!" ſaid Lady Octavia ſharply.

"Mrs. Carloville."

"Mrs. Carloville dying! Where? Not in London?"

"Acroſs the ſquare, at Lord Carloville's houſe, my lady."

"At Lord Carloville's houſe! How ſtrange!" ſaid Lady Octavia. "Send Griffiths," ſaid ſhe to one of the ſervants, as ſhe ſtepped into the carriage.

Mrs. Carloville's maid, who thought any aſſiſtance acceptable, thankfully returned with the houſe-keeper. Ethelreda in the mean time had been removed by the ſervants into the drawing-room. She breathed, but had not yet opened her eyes or ſpoken. Mrs. Griffiths, who prided herſelf

ſelf on her knowledge of phyſic, which ſhe practiſed at Strathener, declared ſhe could not recover, and very good-naturedly waited the whole night, in expectation of ſeeing her go off. Lady Octavia went to her ſiſter's to meet a very large party, where ſhe failed not telling Lady Marianne that Mrs. Carloville was dying.

The ſame day that Ethelreda arrived in London, Captain Conway received a note from his father, intimating he ſhould be glad to ſee him in Portman-ſquare. Conway had ſeen his mother ſeveral times ſince her arrival in town, and Mr. Conway accidentally; but nothing like converſation had paſſed between them ſince their laſt interview at Conway's lodgings.

Captain Conway never doubted but it was his father's influence that had ſo long detained him in London; he concluded too that this day his father intended to aſk for an anſwer, or rather expected a full acceſſion to his terms.

He went therefore in expectation of quarrelling with him; for with regard to Octavia he had neither the power nor the inclination to ſubmit to his will: but, if it were poſſible, he wiſhed to avoid an open rupture; and accordingly he made a thouſand good reſolutions not to ſuffer his turbulent ſpirit to get the better of his temper, how great ſoever might be the provocation.

Mr. Conway received him with ſmiles.

"You do not intend to diſoblige me, Conway, I am certain," ſaid he: "I have a better opinion of your underſtanding."

"Perhaps you have over-rated it then," ſaid Conway, "at leaſt according to your own ſtandard."

"I hope not, ſir." They were both ſilent for ſome minutes. "I am waiting for your anſwer, Captain Conway."

"To

"To what queſtion, ſir?"

"To a queſtion, ſir, to which I am determined to receive but *one* anſwer, and that a deciſive one."

"If ſo, it cannot relate to me, ſince I generally anſwer from the impulſe of the moment; *except* my reſolutions are decidedly taken."

"Give me no provocation, ſir!" cried Mr. Conway. "What reſolutions have you the power to make counter to mine?"

"Any that I have the will to keep," ſaid Conway. "To an independent ſpirit, power and will are the ſame."

"Look to it, Conway! You are on the point of hearing my propoſals for the laſt time.—Will you, or will you not, marry Lady Octavia Conway?"

"I will not."

"Then," cried Mr. Conway, "from this time forward I retrench your income as much as in my power. Learn to live on your pay as an officer——at leaſt till you have learnt obedience——till then I renounce you."

"The leſſon is not ſtriking enough," ſaid Conway, contemptuouſly. "The withdrawing ſo paltry an allowance will teach me nothing I have not already practiſed."

"Is that all?" cried Mr. Conway, graſping at the bare ſhadow of ſucceſs. "I will treble it, if you will comply."

"I am not to be bought, ſir!" ſaid Conway ſteadily.

"And I am not to be provoked, ſir, with impunity," ſaid Mr. Conway aloud. "I will employ every means to humble you. I have intereſt, and I will uſe it; I will deprive you of your ſhip."

"I

"I prevent you by renouncing it," cried Conway, furiouſly tearing the cockade out of his hat, and throwing it on the floor. "If this ſervice be ſubject to the influence of individuals; if it be made ſubſervient to the intereſt of family quarrels, and not to that of the men who ſacrifice their lives in it; if it be guided by cabal, and is made the inſtrument of deſpotiſm; I here renounce it *for ever*." Conway expected no anſwer: he therefore waited for none, but quitted the houſe, and immediately returned to his own lodgings.

Here it was that Conway blamed his own precipitate paſſion, which, in ſpite of his reſolutions, had blinded his reaſon. He ſaw he had raſhly left himſelf without the ſmalleſt reſource by renouncing the ſervice: he ſaw his own fate and that of Ethelreda involved in miſery, from which there was no hope, unleſs he could in ſome degree extricate himſelf by entering into foreign ſervice. It was therefore with a ſentiment ſomething like pleaſure he recollected an engagement to dine that day with Sir Francis L'Eſterling, to meet ſome foreigners of diſtinction, amongſt whom was the Swediſh Ambaſſador, whoſe intereſt and recommendation he meant to ſecure, before his father could be informed of his plans, and by that means circumvent them. At Sir Francis L'Eſterling's door Conway heard of Mrs. Carloville. The ſervants were repeating her name, which was unknown to them, and commenting on her ſuppoſed buſineſs with Sir Francis. He enquired if they knew where ſhe was, and was directed to Groſvenor-ſquare.

The lights and people with the two chaiſes at the door ſhewed him the houſe as he paſſed it. He walked into the room, or rather he advanced no further than the door, when the appearance of

Ethelreda and Lord Caerleon, joined to a thouſand unfortunate ideas that ruſhed into his mind, conſpired, together with the circumſtances that previouſly agitated him, to work upon the impetuoſity of his temper, and raiſe his jealouſy almoſt to madneſs. He ruſhed out of the houſe, determined never more to ſee Ethelreda, and to puniſh her perfidy by killing Caerleon, and then himſelf. Their meeting appeared to him concerted: for the firſt time he thought he could account for his couſin's viſit to St. Siffrid's, and his confuſion in conſequence of their meeting.

He walked, or rather ran, to the Park, forgetting, or not obſerving, the darkneſs of the night made it impoſſible for them to decide their quarrel there. Fortunately they did not meet; for Conway, in his delirium, mentioned no place of appointment; and as Caerleon ſaw nothing of him when he purſued him into the ſtreet, he quietly returned to Lord Trecaſtle's houſe, expecting there to hear of him before the morning. Here he muſed inceſſantly upon Ethelreda, and the evident connection between her and Captain Conway, till morning came and reminded him it was the day fixed for his marriage with Miſs Beralſton.

Conway's violence and rage ſoon ſubſided into grief; and whilſt he wandered about in cold and darkneſs, he forgot his intended revenge, and felt nothing but the keeneſt ſorrow and diſappointment. He reproached himſelf with the blindneſs of his paſſion, that had made him forfeit every thing for a woman ſo unworthy: but each reflection as he made it loſt ſomething of its bitterneſs; and he finally determined not to condemn her unheard, becauſe ſhe now had a right to ſuch an indulgence.

Conway

Conway then returned to his home, reſolved to hear with calmneſs and to act with deciſion. If Ethelreda cleared herſelf to his ſatisfaction, he purpoſed openly to avow his marriage: but if a doubt remained upon his mind after the wiſhed-for explanation, he was fixed to leave her for ever. After ſuch a reſolution, the interval between morning and night paſſed tediouſly and painfully away, for it was not till evening that Conway wiſhed for an interview; for, as the event was doubtful, he thought he could not be too cautious in his proceedings.

CHAP. XXVI.

———ſo much of death her thoughts
Had entertain'd, as dy'd her cheeks with pale.
MILTON.

TOWARDS morning Ethelreda began to recover her recollection and her ſenſes. In ſpite of the entreaties of her atendants, ſhe obſtinately perſiſted in dreſſing herſelf as uſual. Something like deſpair animated her to exert herſelf; and in effect her appearance of ſtrength and compoſure impoſed upon them, and made them believe her recovery real: but there was almoſt the ſhade of death over her countenance, whilſt ſhe imagined ſhe was gaining courage to hear compoſedly of that of Conway, ſo as to deceive her family, and ſpare it the mortification of ever diſcovering, what ſhe termed, her diſgraceful compliance. Whilſt ſhe

ſhe ſat in ſilence, nearly fainting at every ſound, a note, or rather a letter by its length, was brought her from Conway. She read it, but without any emotions of joy or ſurpriſe; though ſhe was relieved, without perceiving it, from more than half her miſery. Conway related in as few words as poſſible his ſituation, and then aſked for one half-hour's converſation at eleven at night.

Ethelreda wrote with a trembling hand, "I ſhall be alone." She muſed inceſſantly on Conway's ſituation; ſhe thought of the legacy; but it was a thought ſhe ſpeedily rejected, and ſo ſhe knew would Conway. By a ſucceſſion of ideas, her mother's jewels recurred to her mind: thoſe jewels ſhe had ſo ſtrenuouſly refuſed to Carloville, ſhe now determined to give to Conway; and to oblige him to accept them, as all the riches ſhe had to offer. She ſent for them, for the caſket was with her clothes; and whilſt ſhe was looking them over, fondly trebling their value in her own mind, a card ſealed up was brought her, which ſhe read immediately. It contained an invitation to a *bal maſqué* that very night, from Sir Francis L'Eſterling. The envelope conſiſted of an elaborate apology for the unpardonable neglect his ſervant, who had been lately hired, had committed, in not delivering Mrs. Carloville's meſſage directly, and entreating permiſſion to wait on her to obtain her pardon perſonally. As civilly as ſhe could, Ethelreda excuſed herſelf from either; and not without ſome apprehenſions of conſequences diſtreſſing and fatal, Ethelreda gave orders to admit no one but Captain Conway.

The ball was planned by Sir Francis, in order to compliment Lord Caerleon's marriage, which was not to take place till the evening. It was to be a maſqued entertainment, becauſe Sir Francis in imitation of Lord Caerleon's nonchalance, declared

clared he deteſted the troubleſome part of maſter of the houſe: "under a maſque he was nobody." And very politely he ſent a card to Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling, as affording her a *decent* opportunity of reconciliation.

Lady Octavia, to whom this circumſtance was communicated, purpoſed firſt calling on Lady Mariamne, and then on Miſs Beralſton, who had promiſed to accompany her to Sir Francis's houſe, to return from thence to her own, a new one of Lord Caerleon's.

Early in the evening Lady Octavia called upon her ſiſter. Lady Mariamne received her with a countenance of conſternation. "Octavia," ſaid ſhe, holding a note, "have you heard any thing? Have you received any anonymous letter?"!

"Me? No!" cried Lady Octavia.

"Well then, do not be alarmed: let me read you this. 'If you wiſh to be of material ſervice to your ſiſter, prevent Mrs. Carloville from ſtaying at home this evening.'"

"It muſt mean ſomething about the Count de Clerac!" ſaid Octavia, looking ſilly and angry.

Lady Mariamne prided herſelf upon her knowledge of heraldry. "I have been examining the arms," ſaid ſhe. "Degraded! raguled! embattled. Three talbots or, paſſant, on a field gules? It informs me nothing. They may poſſibly be *foreign*. Let me look again.—What do you mean to do?"

"Heavens!" cried Lady Octavia, "how forgetful I am! I ſhall do nothing. She muſt be dead by this time." She then reminded her ſiſter of the intelligence ſhe had given her the preceding evening.

"Phoo!"

"Phoo!" ſaid Lady Mariamne contemptuouſly. "Are you impoſed on by a ſilly ſtratagem?"

"Nay," ſaid Lady Octavia, reddening, "you were impoſed on yourſelf laſt night."

"Excuſe me," ſaid Lady Mariamne, "I ſcarcely attended to any thing you ſaid laſt night; I was extremely *abſent*."

"I thought, infinitely too much ſo in your own houſe, for a perſon who aims at the manners of the world, Lady Mariamne."

"I aim!" cried Lady Mariamne, throwing down the note. "If you are not to be convinced that I am right, I adviſe your ladyſhip to follow your own *ſingular* judgment."

"I am *not* convinced then," ſaid Octavia, ſpeaking againſt her conſcience, "becauſe I am not more open to ſtratagems and impoſitions, I think, than you are. I ſhall call, however, as we paſs, to know if ſhe is materially worſe."

"*As* you pleaſe."

"I ſhall call firſt on Miſs Beralſton."—Lady Mariamne made no anſwer, but took her ſeat in the carriage.

At Lord Beralſton's the ladies found Lord Caerleon and his bride, the really beautiful Roſamond, waiting their arrival. Lord Caerleon entreated them to make uſe of his coach: but the ladies did not acquieſce. Lady Octavia told him, they were going to call at Mrs. Carloville's door, and would meet him at Sir Francis L'Eſterling's.

"But I am reſolved not to loſe ſight of you," ſaid he, as gaily as he could, though at the ſame moment his features exhibited anxiety and fatigue. No more objections were made, and both carriages ſtopped at Mrs. Carloville's.

Lady

Lady Octavia's ſervants, who had had no directions to the contrary, inſtantly opened the door and let down the ſtep. "My miſtreſs is not at home," ſaid the man who anſwered the door; who, having received his miſtreſs's orders not to admit any one but Captain Conway, ſaid, ſhe was not at home, without waiting till he was aſked.

"Not at home!" cried Lady Octavia, haſtily leaving the carriage as ſhe ſpoke, without conſidering the impropriety of the proceeding. "Not at home! You muſt be miſtaken. She keeps her bed." By this time ſhe had reached the drawing-room door, which ſhe had opened herſelf; and, followed by the other ladies, who had quitted the carriage, ſhe entered.

Ethelreda roſe feebly to receive them: ſhe endeavoured to conceal her ſurpriſe, and attempted to ſpeak; but the effort overcame her ſtrength, and ſhe was obliged to reſume her ſeat.

Lady Octavia, as ſoon as ſhe had recovered from the confuſion ſhe felt from her own abruptneſs and ill breeding, repeatedly expreſſed her amazement at ſeeing Mrs. Carloville. She begged many pardons for the intruſion; but added, they only meant to wait below whilſt Miſs Beralſton ſaw her, as they apprehended illneſs confined her to her bed. "But," continued Lady Octavia, "you now intend to be at the maſquerade this evening?"

"Mrs. Carloville ſhook her head.

Miſs Beralſton approached her, and, taking her hand with more affection than ſhe had lately ſhown her, "Let *me* perſuade you, dear Mrs. Carloville!" ſaid ſhe. "It will be the laſt favour you will ever confer on Roſamond Beralſton!"

Ethelreda

Ethelreda embraced her affectionately, and wiſhed her every kind of happineſs.

"You will go with us, then?"

Ethelreda again declined, and entreated her to pardon the refuſal, ſince to comply was impoſſible.

"And why impoſſible?" aſked Lady Octavia.

Ethelreda pleaded her dreſs, for want of ſomething elſe to ſay, as ſhe had already done her health and her numerous employments, together with her very ſhort ſtay in town.

"Theſe are all frivolous objections," ſaid Lady Mariamne, "to which I am certain you expect no attention. Come, ſend for your cloak. We ſhall be too late," continued ſhe, with ſurpriſe; "it is paſt ten o'clock."

"It cannot be!" ſaid Ethelreda with alarm; and involuntarily ſhe put her hand on the caſe of jewels, which, though open on the table, had been till then unobſerved by the ladies. At that moment Lord Caerleon approached: he had been waiting anxiouſly in his own carriage, till, ſurpriſed at their ſtay, and unable to bear his reflections on Mrs. Carloville's ſuppoſed illneſs, he ventured to enter the houſe, without any expectation of ſeeing Ethelreda, but in hopes of hearing ſomething that might relieve him from his ſtate of ſuffering and ſuſpenſe.

Ethelreda, who ſaw him, inſtantly ſtarted with terror and diſmay; the lateneſs of the hour made her dread that Conway would make his appearance one moment after the other. It was terrible to think of the appointment being diſcovered even by the ladies; but at the ſight of Caerleon Ethelreda thought only of death and bloodſhed. She repeatedly entreated ſhe might not detain them. Lady Octavia became more preſſing

ſing that ſhe ſhould go, and Miſs Beralſton begged to remain with her. Lord Caerleon ſtood at ſome diſtance without venturing to ſpeak.

Poor Ethelreda's ſituation became every moment more diſtreſſing, and ſhe trembled like a condemned criminal. She conſidered a few moments, and ſaw no poſſible means of avoiding the horrors that ſeemed to threaten her, but by complying with the uncivil importunity of the two ladies; for Miſs Beralſton had ceaſed to torment her.

"I will go," cried ſhe, gaſping with terror, "I will go immediately!" Miſs Beralſton, who ſaw her reluctance and wiſhed to relieve her, ſaid there was not time to dreſs.

"Mrs. Carloville is already dreſſed," ſaid Lady Octavia impatiently. "Nothing is ſo becoming as muſlin; and when I have twiſted theſe pearls amongſt the plaits of her hair," added ſhe, taking them out of the caſket, "and put on theſe ear-rings and bracelets, I am perſuaded ſhe will be perfectly well ſatisfied with her own appearance.

"I do not doubt it," ſaid Lady Mariamne, with her uſual manner.

Ethelreda ſaid nothing, and Lady Octavia attired her as ſhe thought proper. "Put a bandeau acroſs the forehead," ſaid Lord Caerleon, ſpeaking for the firſt time. Octavia was proceeding to put on the bracelets. "Faſten the ſleeves above the elbows with thoſe, Octavia," ſaid he: "it has more an air of the antique."

Ethelreda obſerved nothing, objected to nothing; ſhe walked haſtily to the carriage in an agony of fear and regret. She had no opportunity of either leaving a note or a meſſage for Conway when he came; and this levity and unfeeling caprice of her conduct, as it would appear

pear to him, employed her thoughts till the carriage ſtopped in Harley-ſtreet.

When Ethelreda ſtepped out of the carriage into the hall, ſhe could ſcarcely ſupport herſelf: ſeveral characters, who were entering at the ſame time, ſurrounded her; and their exclamations alone reminded her ſhe was without a maſque.

"It is the goddeſs Juno!" ſaid one, "or Venus herſelf, who has left Cupid and her doves at Paphos!"—"It is rather the *ſtatue* of the goddeſs juſt deſcended from a pedeſtal!" ſaid another. Indeed no human figure ever repreſented a ſtatue more juſtly than that of Ethelreda. The ſymmetry of her figure, her features perfectly Grecian, added to her dreſs, which according to Lord Caerleon's direction, was quite after the antique—in ſhort, nothing but the colour of her hair and her large dark eyes made her deviate in appearance from that of a ſtatue, ſince her complexion was perfect marble, and ſhe ſtood motionleſs and ſilent for ſome moments, leaning againſt a pillar in the hall. So ſhocked at being the object of curioſity and obſervation, under circumſtances ſo peculiarly diſtreſſing, ſhe could neither ſpeak, nor proceed after the reſt of her party, who, unconſcious ſhe did not follow them, were already diſperſed, and loſt to her, amidſt the crowds that Sir Francis had once more aſſembled to amuſe themſelves and laugh at him.

Ethelreda at laſt recovered the uſe of ſpeech, ſo as to deſire a ſervant to call Lady Octavia's carriage. It had driven off. "Lord Caerleon's, then!" cried ſhe, with agitation and impatience. The ſervant, throwing open the door of the library, which was almoſt the only private room in the houſe, deſired ſhe would remain there till the carriage could draw up. At the ſame moment a figure

a figure in a domino, advancing from the crowd, which had continued to increaſe till it made almoſt a large circle round her, called Ethelreda by her name, and, offering an arm, followed her into the library and ſhut the door.

Poor Ethelreda caſt her eyes upon the intruder, but ſaid nothing: ſhe was too much intimidated by the innumerable mortifications and terrors ſhe had already ſuffered to object to the Domino, who appeared not to take any notice of her, but walked ſeveral times acroſs the room from one ſide to the other in evident embarraſſment. He ſtopped at laſt, and deſired her "not to be alarmed."

It was not a ſentence calculated to diſpel fear. Ethelreda made no anſwer, but feebly attempted to reach the door. The Domino ſtretched out one hand to intercept her, and with the other preſented a maſque, which he deſired her to put on inſtantly.

"Let me paſs!" cried Ethelreda in an inarticulate tone, which betrayed her want of courage to inſiſt upon it; "you have no right to detain me."

"I *have* a right," ſaid the Domino: "Do *you* pretend to deny it?"

Ethelreda dropped upon her knees.

"Do you not know my voice?"

"Oh yes!" cried Ethelreda, claſping her hands wildly.

"No noiſe, no noiſe!" ſaid the Domino, raiſing her almoſt lifeleſs from the floor, and faſtening the maſque before her face: then throwing his own domino over her ſhoulders, under which he wore another of a different colour, he ſupported or rather carried her to the door of the library, and from thence into the ſtreet, repeating in a low but abſolute tone, "Silence; at your peril."

CHAP.

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CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

——how chances mock
And chances fill the cup of alteration
With divers liquors! O, if this were ſeen,
The happieſt youth, viewing his progreſs through,
What perils paſt, what croſſes to enſue,
Would ſhut the book, and ſit him down and die.
SHAKESPEARE.

THE party from Groſvenor-ſquare propoſed making a very ſhort ſtay in Harley-ſtreet; and when the hour was expired, and Lord Caerleon had repeatedly intimated, though without much animation, that the good Biſhop was waiting for them at Lord Beralſton's; Miſs Beralſton, with her new ſiſters that were to be, left Sir Francis's houſe, after having ſearched ineffectually for Mrs. Carloville. Lady Octavia ſpared no pains to diſcover her: neither had Lord Caerleon been regardleſs of her abſence; nor had his own concerns prevented him from making a thouſand anxious conjectures upon it.

At a few minutes after eleven, Conway walked with agitation and apprehenſions to Groſvenor-ſquare. He knocked gently, and, without aſking any queſtions of the ſervant, walked at once into the room in which he had ſeen her the night before. He ſtarted when he perceived it empty, and, turning to the man who followed him, aſked for his miſtreſs.—The ſervant ſaid, "She was not at home."

Conway

Conway told his name, imagining that Mrs. Carloville was partially denied.

"My miſtreſs is not at home, ſir," repeated the man.

"Where is ſhe, then?" aſked Conway, his lips quivering partly with rage and partly with fear as he ſpoke.

"Lord Caerleon's ſervant told me they were going to the ball at Sir Francis L'Eſterling's."

"Did Mrs. Carloville go with Lord Caerleon?" aſked Conway with tolerable calmneſs.

He again ſaid, ſhe did.

"What dreſs did ſhe wear?—How am I to know her?"

The ſervant ſaid, "She wore her uſual dreſs, and no maſque."

"And no maſque!" repeated Conway as he left the houſe. "Does ſhe then ſet all decency at defiance?"—It was a hard ſentence for Conway to pronounce of Ethelreda, and he would willingly have made excuſes for her; but too many unfortunate circumſtances had occurred to impreſs his mind unfavourably. Wavering every moment in his intentions, Conway ſometimes thought of refuſing to hear her juſtification, ſhould Ethelreda pretend to offer it.

Conway walked anxiouſly through all the rooms, looking inquiſitively at every object that moved before his eyes, without taking any notice of the ſuperb preſepio, with which Sir Francis had ornamented his room, according to the Italian faſhion at Chriſtmas. He ſearched in vain either for Ethelreda or Lord Caerleon; he ſaw none unmaſqued. Sir Francis himſelf was not to be found amongſt the company: and Conway was returning through the hall, chilled with ſuſpicions, when, recollecting the library as he

he paſſed the door, he abruptly threw it open, and beheld Sir Francis at a table covered with books, pens, and paper. Conway made no ſcruple of interrupting his ſtudies by aſking without ceremony for Mrs. Carloville and Lord Caerleon.

Sir Francis ſtared a few moments as if he had ſeen a viſion; then holding up his finger, in token of ſilence, he reſumed his pen. Conway impatiently repeated his queſtion.

"Stop three moments, and I will read it to you," ſaid Sir Francis.

"Where are Mrs. Carloville and Caerleon?" cried Conway.

"Gone to be married—*He* is," ſaid Sir Francis, calmly.

"You are mad, Sir Francis!" cried Conway, forgetting there was another woman in the univerſe beſide Ethelreda.

"Credo di no!" ſaid Sir Francis, bowing to Conway, as he held in his hand the paper of verſes he had been writing, and which he looked upon as an inconteſtable evidence to the contrary. At the ſame time he began to read them, in order to diſprove the aſſertion: but Conway was content to take his word, and proceeded precipitately to Lord Trecaſtle's houſe, where enquiring for the family, he was directed to that of Lord Beralſton; and purſuing the chain of ideas the forgotten name raiſed in his mind, he expected to find Ethelreda there at the marriage of Roſamond. He boldly walked into the room, without making any interrogations, juſt as the biſhop had cloſed his book, and pronounced the concluding ſentence of the ceremony.

Conway looked at each, and each looked at him; for it was an unuſual thing to ſee him of late, at leaſt to any part of his own family. He

ſcarcely

ſcarcely waited till the new married pair had received the congratulations of the company, before he beckoned Caerleon into another room, to aſk what he had done with Mrs. Carloville.

Caerleon looked ſurpriſed; but immediately related all that had paſſed, ſince her arrival in town, with an air of ſincerity that left no doubt upon the candid mind of Conway; and finiſhed by ſaying, ſhe muſt be returned to her own houſe. "And now," continued Caerleon, "in return for my candour, tell me, Have you any right to make Mrs. Carloville's concerns your own?"

Conway heſitated: he was impreſſed with gratitude at Caerleon's manner of anſwering his numerous and apparently impertinent queſtions, and convinced of his ſincerity, was on the point of telling him every thing; but recollecting how ſtrenuouſly Ethelreda had inſiſted upon ſecrecy, he entreated him not to aſk for his confidence. "Do you not perceive I am under reſtrictions?"

"Which I am the laſt man in the world to urge you to break!" ſaid Caerleon ſmiling ſneeringly, whilſt reſerve and diſappointment clouded his face. "I know that to be let into a confidence of this nature, is only to ſhare fooliſh difficulties, which *you ſentimental people* love to monopolize;—and with all my ſoul I leave them to you!"—They ſhook each other by the hand, and ſeparated apparently ſatisfied.

Lord Caerleon, if he had been decidedly any thing, might have had ſome generoſity. In aſking for his couſin's confidence, he did not mean to make a bad uſe of it, nor was he actually determined to ſerve him. Be it as it will, he was piqued at Conway's reſerve, after he had condeſcended to explain his own conduct: and though ſo recently married, the idea of Ethelreda ſtill fixed

fixed itſelf upon his fancy; and ſince Conway did not chooſe to impart his ſchemes, inſtead of aſſiſting, as was partly his motive in aſking, he reſolved to plague him with lies, and amuſe himſelf with the quarrels he ſhould occaſion. He ſighed when he recollected, that to ſuch a woman as Ethelreda his attentions were no longer formidable, whatever they might once have been; for he was married!

Conway once more took the way to Groſvenor-ſquare. The explanation Lord Caerleon had given, perfectly ſatisfied him with regard to Ethelreda's conduct: but ſtill he was at a loſs to account for her being in London; he feared ſomething unfortunate and diſtreſſing had brought her there; it was a myſtery he much wiſhed to penetrate; and whilſt he conſoled himſelf with the thoughts of ſoon ſeeing Ethelreda, and hearing all his doubts cleared up by her lips, he felt not bodily fatigue—though he had endured more, heightened by the agitation of his mind, within the laſt two days, than moſt conſtitutions are able to ſupport.

Conway ſtood ſome moments deliberating at the door: an idea ſeized him that Ethelreda wiſhed to avoid him, and to fly from the contagion of his misfortunes: he walked a few paces from the door, then ſuddenly returning, knocked with violence, reſolved to rid himſelf of his inſupportable ſuſpicions at once by an immediate converſation.

The door was opened by the ſame ſervant. Conway repeated his queſtions, and received the ſame anſwers. His whole ſoul was chilled with apprehenſions; yet ſtill ſuſpecting the ſervant of a falſehood, he ſeized him by the collar, and, ſhutting the room-door, proteſted he would kill him if he did not tell the whole truth inſtantly. The unfortunate ſervant gave himſelf up for loſt: he

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was perſuaded, Conway by his whole demeanour was mad, and that nothing but the moſt abject ſubmiſſion would deprecate his threatened ſufferings: falling on his knees, he entreated no harm might happen to him, and he would diſcover the whole, which he ſaid he had been forbidden to repeat. He began by ſaying, two perſons had been there, but that they were gone about half an hour ſince.

"Who were they?" cried Conway fiercely.

"They were both maſqued," ſaid the man.

"But you knew your miſtreſs's dreſs?"

"No, ſir; becauſe my miſtreſs went out dreſſed in white, and the perſon I am ſpeaking of had on a black dreſs: but I *think* it was her voice."

"And the other was Lord Caerleon?" ſaid Conway, relapſing into his former error. "I dare ſay it was," cried the man; "for he had on the ſame dreſs. I remember it was ſcarlet."

Conway's eyes flaſhed fire, and he lifted up his hand three times, with an intention of ſtriking his priſoner: but he reſtrained himſelf from ſuch an outrage; and the miſerable informer, entreating him to have patience and hear the reſt, moved ſtep by ſtep towards the door.

"Speak truth, then, as you value your life!" exclaimed Conway with ſternneſs.

"I do, ſir!" ſaid the man.

"Go on."

"The perſon in black gave me a note, which the one in ſcarlet ordered me to give to a man who waited at the ſtreet-door: in a ſhort time after, a gentleman in black, with two others, came; they all went into the drawing-room, where they ſtayed ſome time: I then let them out again, and they went away in a hackney-coach."

"What, all?" ſaid Conway.

"No!" ſaid the man. "Thoſe in the maſques ſtaid a few moments; the one I took for my miſtreſs fainted away, and I was ordered to bring a glaſs of water; and preſently after, the perſon in ſcarlet walked through the hall with her in his arms into the ſtreet, and called out to me not to ſay———"

Thus far the man proceeded without any interruption from Conway, who had been ſupporting himſelf by leaning on a chair. A ſenſation he had never experienced before, in ſpite of his eagerneſs to hear the conclusion of the narrative, overpowered him as the ſervant was finiſhing the ſentence, and he fell upon the floor in a fainting fit. The terrified domeſtic joyfully ſeized the welcome opportunity of making his eſcape, very willingly leaving Captain Conway to recover at his leiſure. He however locked the door, in order to prevent any thing like a purſuit, whilſt he proceeded directly to Portman-ſquare, in order to inform the family there of Captain Conway's ſuppoſed derangement.

By this time it was paſt twelve o'clock; and Mrs. Conway, who kept early hours, was ſpared the pain of hearing the ſervant's deplorable ſtory. Mr. Conway was in his ſtudy with his ſecretary, looking over papers, and had given orders not to be interrupted. The ſervants therefore were rather averſe to making the ſtory known till the morning, proteſting at the ſame time their entire diſbelief of Captain Conway's madneſs. But the man himſelf, who had been too powerfully impreſſed with the idea of his phrenſy to be diſſuaded from his purpoſe, followed the ſervants to the very door of the ſtudy, repeating, "He's as mad as a March hare! I thought he would have killed me!"—The man, finding it neceſſary

neceſſary to raiſe his voice, in order to enforce the truth of his report, very ſoon brought the ſecretary to the door, who, with no very complacent countenance, enquired the cauſe of the diſturbance. Mr. Conway too advanced, upon hearing the name of his ſon repeated by ſeveral of the ſervants, whom the ſtrange ſtory had drawn to the door of the ſtudy.

"What does this noiſe mean?" ſaid Mr. Conway ſternly. All his ſervants were ſilent inſtantly, and the courier, rather impreſſed with his manner, heſitated ſo conveniently, that he gave to his whole ſtory the air of a falſehood. Mr. Conway heard him patiently, and then ſaid, "Preſent my compliments to Captain Conway, and tell him, I have long ſuſpected his madneſs; and when he has recovered his ſenſes, I ſhall be glad to ſee him." He was about to ſhut the door; but happening to look at the livery, he aſked the man, to whom he belonged?

"To Mrs Carloville——that is—to Mr. Harwood I mean."

"Ha, ha! an excellent plot, and very good friends!" ſaid Mr. Conway. "How difficult it is," continued he, turning to his ſecretary with a look of extreme ſelf-approbation, "for people to impoſe on a man practiſed in the intricate ſcience of politics! particularly when they employ ſuch agents as theſe," pointing to the ſervant, "who cannot deliver a meſſage without betraying the whole ſhallow contrivance."

The ſecretary aſſented of courſe, as he followed his principal into the ſtudy and ſhut the door upon the group, who, moving gently from the paſſage, heard the whole account of the two Dominos, and Captain Conway's diſtraction, related in a half-whiſper by the ſcared ſervant, who, towards one o'clock ventured to return, after promiſing

the ſervants to bring Mrs. Conway the whole account in the morning, and to treat his priſoner with all poſſible lenity in the mean time.

This latter trouble, however, was ſpared him; for Conway no ſooner recovered his ſenſes, than, applying to the door, he removed every impediment to his retreat, by forcing it open; and from thence into the ſtreet, he found no farther difficulties to contend with.

It would be impoſſible to deſcribe the ſtate of Conway's mind, when he reached his own lodgings: not one ſyllable of the narrative had been loſt upon him; and when he recovered his ſenſes after the fainting, he wiſhed to loſe them for ever. That Ethelreda was ſeparated from him for ever, by an act of her own, whilſt he had a ſolemn right to ſhare his fate with her, and without bringing infamy and diſgrace upon herſelf ſhe could not take the protection of a ſtranger; that Ethelreda had committed this flagrant outrage againſt decency and morals, appeared to Conway not doubtful, but poſitive, as far as appearances the moſt convincing could be relied on. And yet the whole tenor of Ethelreda's preceding conduct ſeemed almoſt to invalidate the teſtimony of his ſenſes; and whilſt he recapitulated in his own mind her numerous perfections, he could not perſuade himſelf ſhe was not ſtill the ſame paragon ſhe had hitherto appeared. He once more owned, the impetuoſity of his temper had hurried him into exceſſes injurious both to himſelf and her. He began to think there was a neceſſity in this myſterious conduct, which he had not ſufficient penetration to dive into; that it was impoſſible Caerleon, circumſtanced as he was, could have had leiſure to engage in an intrigue——that ſcarlet dominos were very common——that it might have been Harwood himſelf, and motives out of his

his knowledge might have made this diſguiſe neceſſary. The thought no ſooner occurred to Conway, than, catching at it with all the eagerneſs of deſpair, he perſuaded himſelf he had unravelled the whole enigma. He inſtantly ſeized a pen, and wrote a letter to Mrs. Harwood, full of incoherent apologies for the liberty he was taking in inquiring for Mrs. Carloville, and promiſing at ſome future period to make it appear it was not an unjuſtifiable one. He ſealed it, however, without ſpecifying the information he wiſhed to receive from Mrs. Harwood in return—ſome account of Ethelreda's arrival. He fortunately had heard Sir Francis ſay they were at Falmouth, waiting for a wind: thither he directed his letter: and having ordered his ſervant to ſend it by expreſs, he threw himſelf upon a ſopha.

For two nights Conway had not taken any kind of repoſe; and notwithſtanding the reſtleſs agitation of his mind, his broken and diſturbed ſlumbers laſted till late in the morning. When he awoke, he found a ſhort note from his mother, requeſting to know what had given riſe to the ſtrange reports of the preceding evening, which ſhe diſcredited in the main; but, fearing ſomething unpleaſant had happened to occaſion them, ſhe appointed him to breakfaſt with her, ignorant of the lengths to which Conway and his father had carried their contention the preceding day.

Conway, in anſwer, excuſed himſelf from waiting on his mother; but begged to ſee her as ſoon as poſſible, that he might ſtate the whole account of the miſunderſtanding between himſelf and his father. This anſwer perplexed Mrs. Conway extremely, for ſhe had been deſired by her huſband not to countenance her ſon in his diſobedience, which ſhe very well knew amount-

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ed to a prohibition; and, careful not to irritate him by non-compliance, though but with an implied command, Mrs. Conway was under the neceſſity of hearing the whole by letter; and the only conſolation ſhe could afford her ſon, was ſome pecuniary aſſiſtance, which ſhe gueſſed he very much ſtood in need of.

In this poſture ſtood the affair, when Conway's expreſs reached Falmouth.

Fortunately the letter was brought to Mr. Harwood, who, dreading it might convey ſome intelligence fatal to Mrs. Harwood in the preſent weak ſtate of her health, gave orders that neither the letter nor the manner of its arrival ſhould be mentioned before her; and not without agitation, and trembling for what it might contain, he broke the ſeal, and inſtantly looked at the ſignature. When he ſaw it was from Conway, he read it with more compoſure, and was for ſome time at a loſs for its purport, it was expreſſed with ſo little coherence: but after a ſecond peruſal the ſum of all the information it contained, was, that Ethelreda was miſſing; for Harwood knew ſhe was not with him, and with him Conway had ſettled it ſhe was.

What was to be done? Where was he to look for Ethelreda? What was become of his children? Harwood in his perplexity could not anſwer one of theſe interrogations he made to himſelf. He took half a dozen turns acroſs the room, reprobated Conway's impatience, execrated his expreſs, and concluded ſhe was on the road with her retinue. He went immediately to Mrs. Harwood, told her he expected to meet Ethelreda on the road, within a ſtage or two; entreated her not to ſuffer any anxiety for their arrival, and accordingly departed to meet her. He went the firſt few miles of his journey with tolerable compoſure;

poſure; but ſtill finding his expected family did not advance, he grew impatient, ordered a ſecond pair of horſes to be added to his carriage, his fears increaſing in proportion as he proceeded towards London: at length, highly alarmed, he determined not to return till he gained ſome information, and conſequently continued his journey without reſt or interruption till he reached Pall Mall, whither the date of Conway's letter directed him.

By chance Conway was at home. He was juſt returned from a fruitleſs application to the Swediſh Ambaſſador. Mr. Conway had been beforehand with his ſon, and had ſo far ſecured his brother of the diplomatic corps in his intereſt, by his plauſibility and coolneſs, that the Ambaſſador gravely and politely recommended to Captain Conway a reconciliation with his father, in preference to any foreign ſervice, and declined interfering in the affair but as a mediator; in which character he very cordially offered his good offices, but in no other. Theſe Conway civilly declined, and was muſing on his future proſpects, when Harwood burſt into the room.

Conway's heart died with fear, when he ſaw anxiety and expectation on Harwood's countenance. "She is not with you!" cried he.

"No!" ſaid the other, deſpondingly.

Conway ſnatched up his ſword. He had not worn any part of his profeſſional dreſs ſince his renunciation of the ſervice. He was already at the door when Harwood, alarmed at his manner, ſeized his arm, and aſked what he intended to do.

"I cannot tell! Do not aſk me!"—cried he, trying to diſengage his arm from Harwood's graſp.

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"At leaſt let me be of your party!—It is as much my deſire as yours to diſcover them."

"I will hold this point to his throat, till he tell me what is become of her!" cried Conway.

"Him!——Who?——what do you mean?——what do you ſuſpect?" ſaid Harwood, ſcarcely articulating from eagerneſs.

"Caerleon."

"Caerleon!—" repeated Harwood; "Caerleon!—Do you recollect that you are talking of Ethelreda?——You know nothing of her, Conway;——you do not deſerve to know her, whilſt you diſtract yourſelf with ridiculous whims injurious to her, and contrary to common ſenſe."

Though Harwood's tone and countenance were ſtrongly tinctured with anger and ſeverity, there was ſomething in his confident manner that conveyed a ſentiment of hope to the irritated mind of Conway. He loſt his rage in a moment, and throwing down his ſword, "Let us go to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's," cried he: "perhaps he may be able to give us ſome information by this time."

Harwood agreed. In the courſe of their walk, however, he learned from Conway the place of Mrs. Carloville's abode, for the ſhort time ſhe had been in London: he propoſed therefore to call in Groſvenor-ſquare firſt, in order to inform himſelf of every thing that had paſſed; for Conway had related nothing in detail, he was too much occupied in explaining his fears and ſuſpicions. Here, to his equal joy and ſurpriſe, Harwood found his children. The ſervants were anxiouſly expecting the return of Mrs. Carloville, who had been miſſing, they told him, ſince the night of Sir Francis L'Eſterling's entertainment, and for whoſe abſence they could find no ſufficient reaſon.

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Every occurrence that had been related to Captain Conway, was again repeated to Mr. Harwood. The appearance of myſtery in the whole tranſaction, her being in Lord Carloville's houſe, her fainting, and laſtly her diſappearance, were all circumſtances ſo embarraſſing, that Harwood proteſted the intricate detail exceeded his comprehenſion, that he knew not what to think, how to determine, or where to begin a ſearch. At all events, he thought it beſt to diſpatch the children immediately; ſince their abſence would relieve him from a conſiderable care, in ſome degree take off from Mrs. Harwood's ſolitude, and the extreme anxiety ſhe felt to ſee them, as well as her ſiſter, for whoſe abſence he made a plauſible excuſe, not to alarm her with the knowledge of Ethelreda's uncertain fate. No great preparations were neceſſary; ſo that in the courſe of an hour Harwood had completed thus much of his intention, and taken up his abode at a hotel, whither he and Conway adjourned to conſult upon the moſt expedient methods of commencing a ſearch, in preference to going to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's; from whom, upon deliberation, they were certain of receiving little or no information, particularly as Conway now recollected he had already made a fruitleſs application to him.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Celui qui met un frein á la fureur des flots,
Sçait auſſi des méchans arrêter les complots.
RACINE.

SIR Francis L'Eſterling, who hated buſineſs of any kind that had the ſlighteſt claims to be called uſeful, had juſt been reading a letter in conſequence of an application from the new Lord Carloville to rent St. Siffrid's Caſtle. His ſteward had tranſacted the buſineſs, and with ſome difficulty had prevailed on him to read the terms, which Sir Francis had given him full powers to make. He was about to reſume his geometrical ſtudies, when he was forced to ſubmit to another interruption——the entrance of a ſtranger un-announced, of no very promiſing appearance: a large man, apparently about forty, whoſe fiery viſage evidently exhibited tokens of hard drinking, was ſhown into the breakfaſt-room.

Sir Francis received the ſtranger with a kind of diſtant civility, and remained ſilent, in expectation of hearing ſomething in which he moſt probably was not concerned, with an expreſſion of careleſs fatigue on his countenance he took no pains to conceal, whilſt he turned over ſome ground-plans, and geometrical elevations of deſigns in architecture, and with ſome difficulty refrained from going on with the work of compaſs, ſquare and rule.——The ſtranger, after making a ſlight apology for the very apparent interruption, aſked if Sir Francis could give him any information with regard to Mrs. Harwood's preſent abode. After a moment's

a moment's heſitation, Sir Francis ſaid, "he believed they were at Dover, or Southampton, or Falmouth; he knew they were going abroad."

"And Lady Carloville?"——aſked the ſtranger.

"Lady Carloville! Lady Carloville!" repeated Sir Francis, with a puzzled and aſtoniſhed air;—"Did you aſk me, ſir, for Lady Carloville?"

"Yes, ſir, I wiſhed to know if ſhe will be of Mr. Harwood's party to the continent."

"You have really aſked me a very perplexing queſtion, ſir!" ſaid Sir Francis. "For, having never ſpoken to the lady in queſtion, and having only once ſeen her about two nights ſince, in a very large circle, when only the ceremony of introduction paſſed between us, I cannot be ſuppoſed to know much of her Ladyſhip's concerns."

"I can readily account for your not knowing me, Sir Francis!" ſaid the ſtranger, with ſome reſentment.——"But your denying any acquaintance with your couſin, is ſo whimſical and ſo affronting, that, if it were evening inſtead of mid day, I ſhould ſuſpect your ſenſes and perceptions were not perfectly clear."

"Really, ſir!"——cried Sir Francis, with an air of drollery, "I beg your pardon! But never having ſtudied the table of affinity, I did not think relationſhip extended ſo wide."

"Then you do not of courſe conſider me as any?"

"Not the moſt diſtant!——May I beg your name?"

"My name, ſir, is Carloville, and my inclination, to be as diſtant as yours. My ſteward, if you pleaſe, will wait upon you, when you are at leiſure

leiſure, to ſettle the rent and repairs of the Caſtle, before I become your tenant."

"You ſurpriſe me extremely, ſir! infinitely! I am precipitated into perplexity without end! I can give you no reaſon upon earth for it; but I concluded the preſent Lord Carloville to be diametrically the reverſe of you! I have only ſeen him tranſiently, it is true; but he appeared to me to be tall and thin, and rather inclining to pale, withdark eyes, and not above half your age."

"You may take my word for it, then, ſir, he whom you deſcribe was not Lord Carloville—who has the ſatisfaction of wiſhing you a good day."—The ſtranger departed, leaving Sir Francis abſolutely bewildered with conjectures.

In the mean time Conway and Harwood were ſpending their ſtrength and ſpirits in fruitleſs reſearches after Ethelreda. Harwood, who could form to himſelf no poſſible motive within his knowledge, was perplexed and haraſſed by a thouſand vague and unmeaning ſurmiſes, none of which he dared venture to communicate to Conway, whoſe deſpair and violence wanted no provocation to rouſe him into turbulence and unruly paſſion. Indeed it was not without ſome trouble and exertion that Harwood prevented him from breaking out into acts of extravagance bordering on phrenſy, as their proſpects of ſucceſs became loſt in increaſing obſcurity.

Without the leaſt guide or clue to her concealment, it appeared to Harwood abſolutely impoſſible that by any effort of theirs Ethelreda could be diſcovered. It did not appear that any violence had been uſed to take her away from Groſvenor-ſquare, but the contrary; and he more than half believed, though without the ſhadow of imputation

tion on Ethelreda's prudence, that her ſeclusion was voluntary, and that perhaps to her ſiſter ſhe would diſcover herſelf. But with theſe hints Harwood was conſcious, vague and wild as they were, he dared not truſt Conway; nor could he venture to make any enquiries of his wife, leſt the knowledge of Ethelreda's diſappearance ſhould prevent, as he knew it would, the meditated voyage to Liſbon, ſo neceſſary to her health: and it was with the moſt painful reluctance he ſaw the neceſſity of giving up this melancholy ſearch, for the preſervation of Mrs. Harwood's life.

Yet he thought there was ſomething horrid in leaving Conway alone, without a friend to calm his paſſions and influence his reaſon. To prevail on him to give up the purſuit he knew to be actually impoſſible, or he would have entreated him to accompany them; but, with the knowledge he had of Conway's temper, his ardour, his firmneſs, his never-to-be-wearied diligence in accompliſhing a purpoſe where his honour and his heart were concerned, he cautiouſly avoided mentioning the relinquiſhing of the purpoſe, leſt ſuch a propoſal ſhould exaſperate the already diſturbed ſtate of Conway's mind to deſperation and madneſs. Thus diſtracted with fears and apprehenſions of every kind, Harwood was at laſt reduced to an expedient that had occurred to him, and been rejected in his own mind, and which of courſe he had not communicated to Conway—it was that of inſerting an advertiſement in the public papers.

From the noiſe ſuch an affair publicly known muſt make in the world, both Conway and Harwood were averſe to it; but having canvaſſed every poſſible advantage and diſadvantage of ſuch a ſtep, and being thoroughly convinced they could

could ſubſtitute no other equally efficacious (for in effect they had tried almoſt every other), they finally reſolved to inſert an advertiſement deſcribing her perſon and dreſs, but without mentioning a ſyllable of the ſuppoſed companion of her flight. Conway, as having ſeen her laſt, undertook to give the deſcription. He ſat down to the table, and with a trembling hand and agitated ſpirits attempted to write; whilſt Harwood went to call on Lord Caerleon and Sir Francis L'Eſterling, neither of whom he had yet been able to meet with, in order, if it were poſſible, to gather from them ſome information, in addition to what he had already learned from Conway.

Harwood went firſt to Lord Caerleon's houſe, whom he intended aſking to accompany him to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's. He met his lordſhip croſſing the hall, with an aſpect ſo cloudy and diſcompoſed, that Harwood, ſtruck by a gloominеſs in Lord Caerleon ſo unuſual, inſtead of the ordinary greetings that take place between acquaintance after an abſence, accoſted him by aſking what was the matter.

"Nothing——except that I am married!" ſaid Caerleon, with one of his ſneering ſmiles. "Here, you may *look* at the lady, if you pleaſe!" continued he, throwing open a door: "but I rather adviſe you not to ſpeak to her, leſt ſhe and the other ladies" (meaning Lady Mariamne and Lady Octavia) "ſhould exaſperate you, as I gueſs your firſt queſtion, ſtill more than they have done me."

Harwood, a little diſconcerted at being ſo abruptly let into the family ſecrets in the hearing of the ladies, and ſtruck both with Caerleon's hint and the ungracious manner in which they received him (for neither of them ſhowed him any other civility than a ſlight curtſy), advanced no farther

farther than the door; and, turning to Lord Caerleon, intimated a wiſh to ſpeak to him in private.

"Oh, as to that, Mr. Harwood," cried Lady Caerleon, fearful leſt the ſubject ſhould not be diſcuſſed in her hearing, "we all gueſs your buſineſs with my Lord."

"If you come to make enquiries after Mrs. Carloville, I adviſe you to apply to the Count de Clerac," ſaid Lady Octavia.

"By no means!" cried the lady of the houſe, the colour riſing in her face—"I am perſuaded, my Lord can give you ample information, if he chooſe."

Lord Caerleon would willingly have paſſed over theſe ſcandalous hints, by telling Mr. Harwood, he would attend him to another room; but Harwood, whoſe anger, once rouſed, was not eaſily appeaſed, placing his back againſt the door, ſaid calmly, "We will wait, if you pleaſe, my lord, till theſe ladies have condeſcended to come to ſome kind of explanation!"

"As you pleaſe, ſir," ſaid Caerleon, placing himſelf in a chair; "but I would have you remember, that jealous women and ſpiteful women do not always adhere to truth."

There was ſomething ſo cutting in Caerleon's manner, that his lady, who had no idea her jealous airs were to be treated with ſo little ceremony, could only ſhow her anger by burſting into tears. Both the ſiſters, darting furious glances at their brother, in which Harwood came in for his ſhare, tried to conſole her; and Lord Caerleon, with the moſt provoking unconcerned countenance he could aſſume, turning to Harwood, ſaid, "You ſee, we do not lead a *very* inſipid life!"

Harwood,

Harwood, embarraſſed with the awkwardneſs of being a witneſs to this ſpiteful quarrel, was on the point of taking his departure; when the lady, enraged to the laſt degree at her lord's compoſure, proteſting ſhe would not ſtay in his houſe to be ſo publicly and notoriouſly ill-treated, ruſhed into the hall to order her carriage.

Harwood made the beſt of his way into the ſtreet, and Caerleon followed him in a ſort of angry ſilence, till they came to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's.

Here they found Sir Francis in the deepeſt perplexity about the ſtrange man who had juſt quitted him. "Oh, Mr. Harwood! I am extremely glad to ſee you!" cried he: "Pray do you know any thing of my new tenant at the Caſtle?——The moſt extraordinary man! He talked of you and my couſin, till really I could not underſtand him. By Jove I begin to think he is an impoſtor!"——

Sir Francis's rapid diſcourſe at that moment was interrupted by the entrance of the Count de Clerac, who, addreſſing himſelf to Caerleon, exclaimed, "Il eſt reſſuſcité! De Winterfeldt eſt reſſuſcité!"

"What?—Who?" cried Harwood and Caerleon in the ſame moment.

"Colonel de Winterfeldt!" ſaid the Count. "Cela m'a frappé un peu!" continued he, "becauſe I owed him, par hazard, a little money. J'ai cru qu'il fût mort tout de bon: il n'a pas trop l'air d'un revenant cependant."

"Bring him here, if you can, this moment!" cried Harwood, with conſternation and horror on his countenance. Caerleon too appeared equally diſmayed at this unaccountable ſtory, and, ſnatching up his hat, accompanied De Clerac in his purſuit.

Harwood

Harwood was no longer at a loſs to account for Ethelreda's ſudden diſappearance: he concluded ſhe was in Carloville's power; and the miſery of her fate, and the idea of her ſufferings, almoſt took away his ſenſes. Still, however, he was ignorant of the latter part of her melancholy ſtory, as it regarded Conway; nor could he reconcile to himſelf, or account for, the falſe report of his death. All he could gather from Sir Francis confirmed him in the certainty of Carloville's being alive, and that it was he himſelf who had applied for the Caſtle.

The ſound of the knocker rouſed Harwood from a thouſand melancholy projects he had rapidly formed in his own mind, to free her from the bondage of living with Carloville; when Caerleon and De Clerac returned with him whom they had been in purſuit of. It was ſome time before the agitation of Harwood's mind and ſpirits would ſuffer him to ſpeak; nor could he, when he made the attempt, articulate an intelligible ſentence.

Carloville, who entered the room with an unconcern that did honour to his effrontery, prevented him from coming to any explanation with regard to Ethelreda, by aſking for her firſt himſelf.

Harwood, who was intently conſidering the wonderful alteration in his perſon, and his equally wonderful reſurrection, was ſome time before he anſwered: at laſt he ſaid, "Did you aſk *me*, ſir, for Mrs. Carloville?"

"For *Lady* Carloville, ſir; which amounts to the ſame thing. I left her with you; and of courſe with you I expect to find her, or to be immediately informed where ſhe is at preſent."

"I ſhall make no ſcruple of telling you, ſir, that, were I ſo fortunate as to know where ſhe is, I ſhould carefully conceal her," ſaid Harwood, diſcover-

diſcovering ſome ſymptoms of pleaſure and hope on his features, which this unexpected requiſition of Carloville occaſioned.

"Mr. Harwood," replied he, "you will pleaſe to remember, I have the law on my ſide, which allows of no evaſions:——I aſk you for the laſt time, where am I to ſeek for Lady Carloville?"

"You loſe your time with me, ſir; I neither will, nor can, give you any account of her: but I rejoice ſincerely in the poſſibility of her having withdrawn herſelf from the power of one who made no ſcruple to treat her, without the ſmalleſt provocation, with ſelfiſh barbarity: and ſo far from believing you ſuppoſe me capable of giving you any information, it has juſt occurred to me, your unfortunate victim may be at this moment in your power. I have already ſeen inſtances enough of your falſehood and duplicity, to authorize the ſuſpicion."

"You have a great deal yet to learn of my character, if you think this ſhallow evaſive anſwer will ſatisfy me," ſaid Carloville, the crimſon of his face taking a deeper tint. "I have no particular inclination to quarrel with you, Mr. Harwood, or to engage you in uſeleſs expence; but nothing that you can ſay will convince me I do not ſuſpect you with reaſon: the lady is miſſing; the only proof you can give of your ſincerity, provided you wiſh to avoid carrying things to extremity, is to allow me to adverti ſe in your name."

"I care not for your menaces or your opinion, ſir," ſaid Harwood haughtily: "the leſs my name is joined with yours, the more for my honour. If Ethelreda is not already in your power, my name ſhall not be inſtrumental in drawing her from her concealment. If you have

ſpoken

ſpoken the truth, your own name may be as efficacious as mine." Harwood haſtily and inſtantaneouſly quitted the houſe. He was impatient to return to Conway, in order to conſult and adviſe with him, whether it were ſtill expedient to continue their purſuit, or ſuffer Ethelreda to remain in her unknown concealment."

CHAP. XXIX.

Je ne la verrai plus—mais à d'autres attraits
Mon cœur, mon triſte cœur, eſt fermé pour jamais.

VOLTAIRE.

IF Harwood had entertained the ſlighteſt idea that the news of Carloville's exiſtence ſo materially concerned Conway, he would certainly have concealed the whole account, or at leaſt have told it with preparation and caution, that the firſt violence of the ſhock might in ſome meaſure loſe its effect. But thinking on the contrary that Conway would be relieved from a load of dreadful ſuſpicions, which he ſtill harboured in ſpite of his friend's aſſurances, Harwood was in haſte till he had communicated the ſtrange ſtory; nor did he immediately perceive the terrible detail had ſtupefied all his faculties, and that he ſtood looking at him with the vacant ſtare of one who ſees ſomething ſupernatural.

It was ſome time before Conway recovered his recollection; and then, inſtead of falling into wild ravings, and frantic exclamations, he uttered nothing

nothing but groans; and ſo entirely were his ſpirits depreſſed, that he had not courage to aſk one ſingle particular of the diſtreſſing relation.

Harwood, ſhocked and alarmed at the effect of his detail, and thinking the deſponding ſtate of Conway's mind required conſtant attention, was determined by fraud (for he knew no perſuaſions would avail) to prevail on him to ſet out with him for Liſbon, whither he was impatient to accompany his family; as any longer ſtay in London appeared to him needleſs, if Ethelreda were really in her huſband's power. And ſhould ſhe have eſcaped (which he partly hoped), he thought it moſt probable ſhe would fly to them, as being ſure of a defence and refuge with him and her ſiſter. He therefore made no ſcruple of concluding his narrative, by telling Conway that Ethelreda had fled from her huſband, and he had every reaſon to believe ſhe would ſhelter herſelf with them in Portugal.

Harwood prefaced this invention by ſaying, it would moſt probably be ſome time before ſhe ventured to diſcover herſelf even to them. He therefore was not ſurpriſed that Conway expreſſed but faint emotions of joy: on the contrary, he was pleaſed at it, as the exceſs of his diſappointment would only be the greater when the deluſion was known.

Conway however inſiſted on Harwood's departing alone, promiſing to follow by another route, in hopes of intercepting the fugitive; and accordingly the departure of each was fixed on for the next day, or the day after at fartheſt.

Caerleon, who with ſome reaſon, from the moment of Carloville's re-appearance, had dreaded falling under the imputation of having propagated a notorious falſehood, remained at Sir Francis L'Eſterling's, in order to draw from him, if poſſible,

ſible, by means of the Count de Clerac, who was not ſparing of his queſtions, ſome reaſon for the report. But it was all to no purpoſe. Carloville turned an impenetrable ear to his hints: nor would he drop a ſyllable from which Caerleon could gather the motives of his conduct; nor would he relieve the impertinent curioſity of De Clerac by explaining how Lord Carloville and Colonel de Winterfeldt happened to be one individual. But having reminded the latter of a trifling debt of ſome hundred louis, he took his departure, leaving them at liberty to gueſs and comment at their leiſure.

CHAP. XXX.

——I wiſh I could
Quit all offences with as clear excuſe,
As well as I am doubtleſs I can purge
Myſelf of many I am charged withal.

SHAKESPEARE.

LORD Caerleon had ſcarcely quitted his own houſe with Mr. Harwood, when Lord Trecaſtle ſtopped at the door, and at the ſame time, in obedience to her Ladyſhip's preſſing orders, Lady Caerleon's carriage; in attempting to reach which in all the majeſty of reſentful airs, ſhe overlooked her father-in-law, and gave him ſo rude a ſhock as ſhe paſſed him, that the good peer, who had ſcarcely recovered the uſe of his feet ſince a late fit of the gout, was nearly proſtrate in the hall. "Pſhaw!" cried he peeviſhly; not knowing

ing at firſt what flouncing lady had treated him with ſo little ceremony.

"Oh, my lord!——I beg your pardon," cried ſhe, ſtill going towards the door.

"What! fair Roſamond!"—Why, your ladyſhip has nearly made me loſe my centre of gravity; and nothing will reſtore the equilibrium but a moment's converſation, and ſome of thoſe ſmiles you uſed to excel in. This is the firſt viſit I have paid you in your own houſe, and the firſt I have made ſince my long confinement," ſaid the Earl, forgetting his offended foot with perfect good humour.—At the ſame time he preſented her a morocco caſe which he held in his hand.

Lady Caerleon gueſſed it contained jewels; and as ſhe knew Lord Trecaſtle's ſplendid ſpirit, ſhe gueſſed they were magnificent. It was a ſevere trial to ſo pretty a woman as Lady Caerleon, to be obliged to forego ſuch an addition to her regalia: but ſhe was too angry not to make the ſacrifice; and with tears in her eyes ſhe told Lord Trecaſtle, "She was ſorry it was not in her power to ſtay in that houſe to entertain him; but at her brother's houſe, at Lord Beralſton's, ſhe ſhould always be happy to ſee him."

Lord Trecaſtle now began to perceive, by her tone and ruffled countenance, that ſomething had vexed her. In vain, however, he tried to conſole her, as he was equally unſucceſsful in all attempts to diſcover the cauſe. The more ſhe was coaxed and humoured, the more ſullen ſhe grew. At laſt Lord Trecaſtle aſked, with a ſmile, if Caerleon had offended her?

"Lord Caerleon," ſaid ſhe, "is too much taken up with his new idol, to pay much attention to my anger or my approbation." With theſe words, and a ſlight bow to Lord Trecaſtle, ſhe placed

placed herſelf in her carriage, and in a very determined tone ordered herſelf to be driven to Lord Beralſton's. Her brother, ſhe knew, was not at home; or ſhe would not have ventured to make ſo ridiculous an éclat.

As for Lord Trecaſtle, ſo far from thinking his new daughter, to whom he was extremely partial, either captious or petulant, he returned to his own houſe highly exaſperated againſt his ſon; of whom having heard from time to time little anecdotes of a ſimilar nature, he gave full credit to Lady Caerleon's innuendo, and full ſcope to his own reſentment.

At his return, Caerleon heard his lady was abſent, and that Lord Trecaſtle had been there; and gueſſing immediately what ſort of impreſſion the old lord had received, he haſtened to Groſvenor-ſquare to remove it before it had been ſtrengthened by time, ſo as to become a part of his creed beyond the power of rhetoric and cajolery to remove.

When Caerleon ſhowed himſelf at the door of the room where Lord Trecaſtle was tranſacting buſineſs with his Strathener bailiff, he no ſooner caught a glimpſe of his ſon's perſon, than he ſaid in an angry tone, "Howel, tell that gentleman I am engaged."

Howel, with more obedience than manners, was going to ſhut the door in his face.

"Do you know *who I* am?" ſaid Caerleon, in a tone which he intended ſhould be very impoſing. Howel inſtantly drew back; and Caerleon advanced to the table, which was covered with bills and money to a large amount.

Lord Trecaſtle, whoſe rage had riſen to its higheſt pitch on ſeeing Caerleon ſo coolly countermand his orders, ſat down in his chair unable to ſpeak for paſſion, at the ſame time beckoning him

him to leave the room. Caerleon was ſurpriſingly ready at telling a lie for his own advantage; and knowing the national debt to be a ſyſtem in politics which his father could neither underſtand nor endure, he ſaid gravely, "I am not ſurpriſed at ſeeing your lordſhip ſo diſcompoſed: I ſuppoſe you have heard of the newly propoſed loan!"

"Another loan!" cried Lord Trecaſtle in aſtoniſhment, his anger inſtantly diverted to a new channel.—"And where is the intereſt to come from?"

"Some abler financier than *I am* muſt determine," ſaid Caerleon.

"I proteſt this villainous national debt has coſt me more ſleepleſs nights than ever the gout did. I ſhall not cloſe my eyes for a week!"

"Tis an abominable thing to be in debt!" ſaid Caerleon, looking ſteadily at the money: "I believe I ſhould ſleep better, if it were not for a few trifles of that ſort, that hurt my feelings extremely."

"You may put the money in your bag again, Howel," ſaid Lord Trecaſtle, not chooſing to comprehend his ſon's hint; or, more properly, wiſhing to put it out of his reach. But Caerleon, giving Howel a look which implied, "Do as *I* bid you," drew his chair ſtill nearer, and, placing his whole arm and hand upon the bills, as if by accident, enquired if Lord Trecaſtle had heard the anſwer to the requiſition made by our Court, to a certain great Northern Potentate, on the ſubject of an alliance ſuppoſed to be extremely inimical to the intereſts of a hitherto neutral ſtate. "You comprehend me, my lord? I know not what the requiſition can poſſibly be, but the capital was in a flame! The great princeſs was audibly heard to ſwear at a certain ambaſſador, who is returned full of reſentment at the injury. It is

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"I imagine it muſt," ſaid Caerleon. "But the ſmall ſum I mean to borrow of you" (graſping his hand full of all within his reach) "is intended to enable me to keep my ſtud, which otherwiſe I muſt diſpoſe of."

"I am almoſt determined never to give you another ſhilling," ſaid Lord Trecaſtle, half laughing at his ſon's dexterity. "But, however, tell me how much you have pillaged; and if I allow you to keep it, promiſe not to be ſo extravagant in future. I know you ſpent already, before you had an eſtabliſhment, almoſt as much as I do!"

Caerleon was about to give an account of his ſpoils, when Mr. Conway walked ſtiffly into the room, with one eye fixed on his brother, and the other on his nephew. Caerleon, immediately gueſſing by the diſtribution of his uncle's glances that ſome formal complaint was going to be preferred, haſtily thruſt the unexpected acquiſition into his pocket, and, putting on one of his moſt defying countenances, eyed him in ſilence.

Mr. Conway, always one of the laſt to believe a ſtory when told, was of courſe one of the laſt to hear of Ethelreda's flight; though, in conſequence of the ſervant's report who brought an account of Captain Conway's madneſs, nothing elſe had been talked of by the domeſtics of his family; who, according to the ſurmiſes and hints with which in fact Conway himſelf in his rage had

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furniſhed them, ſaid confidently that Lord Caerleon had privately diſpoſed of her. The ſecretary, who was one of the earlieſt informed of the report, would willingly have repeated it again; but Mr. Conway had ſo many times cut him ſhort with league, convention, treaty of pacification, treaty of alliance, government, conſtitution, and the exigencies of the ſtate, it was with difficulty he could ſeize a moment when his patron's leiſure would allow him to hear the detail; which he had no ſooner done, than, blaming his ſecretary extremely for having delayed to give him information of ſo much importance, he poſted to Lord Trecaſtle's, in order to prevail on him to interpoſe his authority with Lord Caerleon, whom he looked upon as Conway's agent and abettor in this buſineſs, but whom he thought it more adviſable and more politic to treat as the principal aggreſſor.

"I am ſorry," ſaid Mr. Conway, addreſſing his brother——"I am very much diſtreſſed, Lord Trecaſtle, at being obliged—at being abſolutely forced—to make a complaint to you againſt one of your own family; but, really, a breach of morals ſo notorious——ſo flagrant an abuſe of decorum—" looking at Lord Caerleon—"ſo——"

"Why, what has he done?" cried Lord Trecaſtle.

"My uncle thinks I have ſtolen ſomething," ſaid Caerleon in a calm undaunted tone.

"Yes, I *know* you have," repeated Mr. Conway. "You are the worſt of robbers!"

"A robber!" cried the liberal Lord Trecaſtle. "Caerleon a robber!—Impoſſible!"

"He means the notes I have taken from you!" very dextrouſly whiſpered Caerleon to his father; then ſeizing his uncle's arm, he almoſt forcibly dragged

dragged him out of the room, and ſhut the door after them, in order to prevent Lord Trecaſtle from coming to any explanation.

"What do you mean, ſir," ſaid he, addreſſing Mr. Conway, "by making complaints of me to my father? And without foundation, too!—— Every one is ſtrangely prepoſſeſſed that *I* have ſecreted Mrs. Carloville; but it is my opinion, Captain Conway, if he would, could give you fuller information than any other perſon. I am grieved," continued he, as he accompanied Mr. Conway to the door, "that I am too much engaged this morning to aſſiſt you in plaguing my couſin, which I divine to be your intention; having *myſelf* tolerable endowments that way, which joined to your ſuperior talents, we might, perhaps, with a little exertion, drive Harry out of his ſenſes!"

"I deſire, Lord Caerleon, you will not run away with any falſe ideas of my intentions," ſaid Mr. Conway gravely. "I wiſh to have it received that Captain Conway is perfectly his own maſter."

"Oh the unconſcionable cheat!——To dream of paſſing ſuch a palpable impoſition upon any thing but an idiot!" cried Caerleon, burſting with laughter, almoſt before he was out of hearing; enchanted at his own dexterity, and not ſorry for the opportunity he had given Conway's father to torment him, to whom he owed ſome malice for his reſerve.

As for Lord Trecaſtle, imagining Caerleon had only been ſhewing his uncle the door in reſentment for having called him robber in ſo unprovoked a manner, and for which he himſelf felt equal reſentment; he was too well pleaſed at the affronting manner in which, as he ſuppoſed, Caerleon had diſmiſſed his uncle, to require any fur-

ther explanation; ſo that Caerleon effected the purpoſe of his viſit, by reinſtating himſelf in his father's good graces, without ever having come to the ſubject of his anger.

In the evening Lady Caerleon returned to her own houſe, where, as ſhe had diſmiſſed her airs, ſhe was civilly received by her Lord; having very wiſely conſidered, during her temporary ſeparation, that, ſhould Lord Caerleon and herſelf become the topic of public converſation, her part in the drama would appear both humiliating and ridiculous.

CHAP. XXXI.

In quella ferma voce,
In quell' aperta fronte,
In quel guardo ſicuro, in quel ſublimo
Intrepido parlar, chi d'innocenza,
Chi mai di verità tutti i piu grandi
Luminoſi caratteri non vede?

METASTASIO.

THE diſguiſed conductor of Ethelreda ſupported her from Sir Francis L'Eſterling's houſe, till they reached the corner of the ſtreet; then lifting her into a hackney-coach, he ordered the man to drive to Groſvenor-ſquare. Ethelreda in the mean time was perfectly compoſed, or rather ſhe was perfectly ſilent. When the carriage ſtopped, her companion aſked if ſhe choſe to walk or be carried into the houſe? She anſwered, ſhe was

was able to walk. Accordingly with ſome ſupport ſhe proceeded to the drawing room. The ſervant, though ſurpriſed at the alteration in her habit, concluded it was his miſtreſs, and of courſe ſtarted no kind of objection.

Carloville—for it was he!—Carloville ſhut the door; then taking off his maſk, "I do not ſhew my face;" ſaid he, "in order to identify myſelf, for I am convinced my perſon is too much altered for you to know it again; it is ſufficient, however, that you recognize my voice."

Ethelreda looked at him; then ſhutting her eyes, ſhe faintly uttered "Yes."

"Well! I am grown confounded ugly, that's certain," ſaid he; "I hope your ladyſhip has not been improving in the ſame manner."—"Give me no title!" cried Ethelreda in a ſuffocated tone, "it never ſhall belong to me."

"Not quite ſo violent," ſaid he, contracting his brows, and changing his tone of levity for a more ſerious one; "there is part of your conduct, faultleſs as you may think to appear, which requires an immediate explanation."

"I am ready to give it," ſaid Ethelreda, acquiring more firmneſs as ſhe recovered from the firſt terrible ſhock of ſurpriſe.

"Take off your maſk then, that I may ſee whether your countenance and your invention have practiſed together."

Ethelreda obeyed inſtantly; and fixing her eyes on Carloville for two or three minutes, ſhe looked as if ſhe aſked his ſevereſt ſcrutiny. He was evidently confuſed; he turned away his head in order to hide his embarraſſment, and aſked in a harſh tone, "Whom ſhe had converſed with at the little gate of the myrtle-garden, the morning after Sir Francis's fête?"

"It

"It was Captain Conway," ſaid Ethelreda, apparently, but not in reality, undiſmayed at the frightful and revengeful glare that accompanied his queſtion.

"Your lover?"

"My huſband."

"Your huſband!" repeated Carloville. "You are amply provided for!" he added, with a ſneer. "Pray, how long is it ſince my *diſconſolate* widow converted herſelf into another man's wife?"

His manner was particularly inſulting; but Ethelreda anſwered, with all poſſible mildneſs, ſhe was married that morning, and had not ſeen Conway ſince.

"Nor ever ſhall again," cried Carloville, with a malignant ſmile; "but you will require bolts and bars, my dear!"

"I will ſolemnly promiſe never to ſee him again," ſaid Ethelreda courageouſly, "provided you will agree to my diſpoſing of myſelf out of your ſight."

"Yes, yes, it is pretty clear you hate the ſight of me; but I think you as handſome as ever; ſo do not expect me to make any agreements to my own diſhonour. I know how promiſes are kept after the turn is ſerved. My *dear* wife, your reputation is too precious to me! Calumny is too apt to attack beautiful young girls, like you, who do not know their own minds, even *without* reaſon; but it is to be hoped, as I mean to be tolerably careful, whilſt your perſon is in my cuſtody, the cenſorious world will not ſlander it."

To doubt Ethelreda's word was a certain method of raiſing her anger. "I am ſorry," ſaid ſhe warmly, "you have but one ſtandard for truth and ſincerity; that you judge me by your-

ſelf;

ſelf; I, who never yet either broke a promiſe, or practiſed a deception."

Carloville felt both the ſeverity and the truth of the aſſertion; but it was by no means his intention that ſhe ſhould perceive it: he therefore pretended not to have liſtened, and ſaid careleſsly, "Apropos, of money; have you received your legacy yet?"

She anſwered, ſhe had not.

"Send to Jephſon immediately; I muſt have a thouſand at all events."

"Accede to my terms," ſaid Ethelreda eagerly, "and you ſhall poſſeſs the whole."

Carloville again ſternly refuſed.

Ethelreda had ſupported herſelf with hopes hitherto, and, amidſt her anxiety to make her own terms with Carloville, the agony of mind which ſhe endured was imperceptible almoſt to herſelf; but his inexorable manner made her fear ſhe ſhould not prevail, when it ſtruck into her mind to make one deſperate propoſal, which ſtill ſhe dreaded he would reject——"The Caſtle of St. Siffrid," ſaid ſhe, "is to be let; confine me in any part of it, but promiſe never to ſee me, or to diſcloſe———"

"And ſo become a jailor to all intents and purpoſes!" cried he, interrupting her. "A very rational ſcheme, but rather too troubleſome! Deviſe another."

"I will provide my own jailor," ſaid Ethelreda firmly; "old Llewellyn, who was preſent at my laſt marriage, and whoſe fidelity I could rely upon, though a price were ſet upon my head."

"You can depend on old Llewellyn!" repeated he thoughtfully: "he has a reputation for honeſty, I ſuppoſe——there is a great deal in character:" and then, as if to ſhake off ſome unpleaſant conviction, he added in a gayer tone, "Come, come,

come, leave all this romantic folly, and ſend for the money: time wears."

"The money," ſaid Ethelreda reſolutely, "waits on your conſent: if you refuſe me, I will formally relinquiſh it to your brother, as in fact I am no longer entitled to it."

"I have no intention of defrauding any one," ſaid Carloville; "it will ſoon be in my power to refund what I ſhall oblige you to borrow for me; and though you treat me with ſcorn, I have no wiſh but to regain your good opinion, which an irreſiſtible fatality has been the means of my loſing."

"All retroſpects muſt be as"—degrading, ſhe was about to ſay——"painful as they are unavailing——let us not diſcuſs them——I return to my propoſal, which is final."

Carloville, now finding her indeed reſolved and ſteady in purpoſe, tried to ſoothe and perſuade her to give up ſo extraordinary a reſolution: he repreſented to her, the ſtep once taken, it was irrevocable; there would be no poſſibility of her returning to ſociety, ſhould her ſolitude and confinement become ever ſo irkſome and dreadful; "unleſs," he added, "you look forward to my death as a releaſe, and that may prove a wearying proſpect; though I confeſs, if any thing can cut me off in my prime, it will be to know it is your wiſh. If my heart is ſo ſtubborn as to hold out againſt my own remorſe and your prayers, think of your youth; conſider how many years of ſolitude and ſilence uninterrupted you have to exiſt; think of what you relinquiſh for ever——a gay adoring world, a ſplendid fortune, a title, every advantage that beauty and conſequence beſtow: and what will they not command?"

"Peace of mind, an approving conſcience," ſaid Ethelreda.

"I

"Is yours then ill at eaſe?" ſaid Carloville, trying to conceal his confuſion. "Under this ſhew of innocence are you trying to ſhelter yourſelf from remorſe? Is that the motive of concealment?"

"It would degrade me more to anſwer than to hear you," ſaid Ethelreda with indignation:—"ſolitude has no terrors but for the guilty."

"You hint, then, that *I* ſhall never try it?—Well, burthen your tender conſcience with one fraud at leaſt; cheat my brother of the legacy, and turn yourſelf over to everlaſting repentance as ſoon as you pleaſe."

It was fortunate for Ethelreda that money was abſolutely neceſſary to Carloville in the proſecution of his deſigns. Accordingly the lawyer was ſent to, and the legacy and all the attendant buſineſs ſettled without further delay. It was not till they were alone that Ethelreda began to feel all the horrors of her fate. Her ſufferings were too intenſe to be relieved by tears; and when Carloville once more wrapped her in the fatal black domino, ſhe fainted, and did not recover her ſenſes or recollection, till the motion of a carriage helped to reſtore her to her miſeries.

They ſtopped at a houſe in an obſcure part of the town, where Carloville left Ethelreda, and returned to his own lodgings; intending to hire the Caſtle of Sir Francis L'Eſterling by letter, which, under the preſent circumſtances, he looked upon to be the very beſt expedient he could have deviſed, ſince a letter from Lord Carloville would have all the efficacy of a forged name, without being one in reality.

The manner thus ſettled, the tranſaction itſelf took up but very little time. Lord Carloville was an unexceptionable tenant; and Sir Francis, glad at all events to get rid of an incum-

brance (for as ſuch he conſidered the Caſtle), ordered his ſteward to reply, and accept him immediately. Carloville next proceeded to rid the houſe of all Harwood's ſervants, by writing to Llewellyn in Ethelreda's name to diſmiſs them—to remain there *himſelf* till he heard further from her—but to be particularly cautious not to mention her name, or to hint that ſhe had written to him.

Every thing thus arranged according to Ethelreda's directions, Lord Carloville ventured, late in the third evening from her quitting Groſvenor-ſquare, to call at the houſe where he had placed her, in order to ſettle the time and mode of her departure. He was ſhocked and alarmed beyond meaſure, when he heard from the people of the houſe, that ſhe had been delirious the two firſt days ſince her arrival, that they had ſent for a phyſician to attend her, and that ſhe was now better, and ſitting up in expectation of his arrival.

It had been previouſly reſolved upon, that Carloville ſhould return on the third night, if his ſcheme in hiring the Caſtle took effect; and notwithſtanding her delirium, Ethelreda had not forgotten the agreement. Weak, and almoſt dying, ſhe ſtill adhered to her firſt reſolution. She dreaded being diſcovered to Conway, through the attendance of her phyſician: ſhe therefore no ſooner beheld Carloville, than in a firm, though languid, tone ſhe deſired to leave the houſe, and that ſame evening commence her journey.

Carloville looked at her, and was ſtruck with horror at the alteration of her countenance: he began to fear he ſhould have her death to anſwer for, compared to which his other crimes appeared to him white as wool. He conjured her to lay aſide her purpoſe; but ſhe was not to be perſuaded—ſhe perſiſted wildly in her deſign, declaring the

the preſervation of her ſenſes depended on his compliance.

Carloville ſaw by her manner, that her determinations were not to be diſputed: he therefore promiſed to return in half an hour, properly provided with every means to perform the journey ſecretly, and with expedition. He was not worſe than his word. He ſeized a convenient opportunity of taking her out of the houſe unobſerved by the people of it; a carriage waited at a ſmall diſtance, in which he placed her, after leaving a bill encloſed in a note of thanks to the phyſician, and an adequate ſum to indemnify the people for what expence and trouble they had been put to.

Ethelreda was no ſooner ſeated in the carriage than ſhe became more tranquil, and felt her ſpirits much relieved. She was no longer in danger of being conſtrained to live with Carloville; ſhe was certain of never meeting Conway to add to his ſufferings by her own; and more than all, ſhe hoped it would be ſome alleviation of them, for Conway to know that ſhe had concealed herſelf for his ſake. She hoped, too, to eſcape the cenſure and obloquy any other mode of conduct would unavoidably have drawn upon her; for ſhe had reſolved to encounter both poverty and diſgrace, rather than live with Carloville for the future.

Her ſtrength therefore returning, rather than declining, in this journey, is not unaccountable; ſhe was inwardly perſuaded ſhe was purſuing the only courſe that could ſecure her from years of unabating miſery.

Carloville, when they reached Briſtol, in order to get undiſcovered to the Caſtle, had determined to hire a ſkiff and land at once under the walls. He was conſiderably endowed with that ſort of courage which is not badly diſtinguiſhed by the name

name of fool-hardineſs; conſequently the known danger of the beach was in his opinion no impediment; and as a ſteady eaſterly wind promiſed him a ſpeedy paſſage, he concluded himſelf, under the direction of an experienced pilot, in perfect ſafety. As for Ethelreda, tho' the danger was not unknown to her both from experience and report, ſhe was content to run all hazards--nor did ſhe make one ſingle objection to being out a night in winter in a veſſel but little better than an open boat. The darkneſs of the night was ſomewhat relieved by the dim light of the waning moon. Ethelreda, wrapped in a horſeman's coat and a large ſlouched hat, which entirely concealed her perſon and her ſex from the mariners, was now brought upon deck, and informed they had finiſhed their deſtined voyage. Notwithſtanding her courage and reſolution, ſhe ſuffered extremely from terror as well as intenſe cold; for their little veſſel had repeatedly been in danger, from the large maſſes of ice that had floated down from the rivers, and occaſioned much alarm amongſt the ſeamen.

It was low water, and Ethelreda ſaw at a diſtance, by the aſſiſtance of the moon-beams that dimly ſhone upon the Caſtle, the embattled turrets of her intended priſon, rendered more dreary in appearance by the ſnow that reſted upon their roofs. As the ſeamen carried her through the ſhallow water, ſhe looked towards that part of the beach where her life had once been ſaved by Conway; ſhe clearly perceived the long ridge of rocks ſtretching into the ſea, and, in the anguiſh of her heart, wiſhed ſhe had periſhed there.

Carloville ſupported her trembling ſteps along the rugged beach till they came to the gardens; it was with extreme difficulty, faint, cold, and weak as ſhe was, that with his ſingle aſſiſtance (for the

ſailors

ſailors were returned to take care of their veſſel), ſhe aſcended the numerous flights of ſteps, from one terrace to another, till at laſt they arrived, quite weary and exhauſted, at the tower through which they were to gain admiſſion to the hall. But the difficulty of obtaining a peaceable entrance was not inconſiderable. The horn that age after age had been blown by barons, knights, and heralds, was ſtill chained to the gate. Sir Roger, like his anceſtors, knew the uſe of no other bells in the Caſtle but alarm bells, and to Harwood all his peculiarities were ſacred.

Carloville would willingly have avoided the noiſe, leſt any of the ſervants beſides Llewellyn ſhould ſtill remain in the Caſtle; but there was no alternative: ſo, applying the horn to his lips, he ſent forth a blaſt that inſtantly awakened Llewellyn and his wife, who in fact were the only living *human* creatures within its walls. There was no neceſſity to repeat the ſtrain; for the owls both within and without, by their clamorous hootings, helped to diſpel Llewellyn's ſlumbers, who awoke with his head full of ſuperſtitious tales of chivalry, and traditionary ſtories of the L'Eſterling family. He at once concluded that Sir Roger, like ſome of his predeceſſors, was ſurveying the out-works of his Caſtle, to which vigilant cuſtom of its deceaſed poſſeſſors the undecaying ſtate of the Caſtle was attributed. The ſingle blaſt of the horn confirmed Llewellyn in the truth of his ſurmiſes, as Sir Roger in his lifetime was never known to ſound a ſecond time——in token of the ready obedience he expected from his vaſſals in the diſcharge of their duty. Llewellyn, who had ſerved his maſter in his life with ſcrupulous exactneſs, was determined not to be deficient in this laſt point of duty; he therefore roſe inſtantly, and deſcended

to

to the portal, followed by Winifred, whoſe fears would not ſuffer her to remain behind. As Llewellyn walked through the hall, he unhitched a ruſty pike from the armour racks, to be provided againſt a ſurpriſe: at all events, the ghoſt of his maſter he imagined would not be diſpleaſed to ſee him ſo cautious. Then boldly opening the door, he beheld—not the ghoſt of Sir Roger dreſſed in the complete ſuit of armour which was hung up in the church of St. Siffrid, and by tradition worn by all the aërial viſitants upon theſe occaſions—but two people in ſlouched hats and great coats!

Llewellyn, concluding by their garb they were people of this world, and not the ſpirits of the departed, attempted to ſhut the door rudely in their faces; but Carloville prevented him by applying his hand to it; and calling out to him, "Llewellyn! it is your miſtreſs," he ſpeedily gained an entrance into the hall.

Ethelreda now attempted to ſpeak, in order to convince him it was herſelf; and Carloville, taking off her hat and turning her pale face to the moon-light, preſented indeed the features of Ethelreda to the remembrance of the aſtoniſhed Llewellyn and Winifred—but ſo wan and altered, that they both cried out it was a viſion, and fled from the ſight into the great kitchen, where the dying light of a large wood fire indiſtinctly ſhewed them the two ghoſts following. Their terror, however, ſubſided on ſeeing Carloville offer Ethelreda ſome bread, part of the remains of their own ſupper, which ſtood upon a table; and when ſhe aſked for a little water, Winifred ventured to approach her with it, and to touch her hand, which Ethelreda held out in order to convince her of her earthly exiſtence.

Both

Both Llewellyn and Winifred had been accuſtomed to keep a diſtance as reſpectful as to ſovereigns, towards Sir Roger and his family. And though they perceived and gueſſed that ſomething extraordinary had happened to their miſtreſs, not even their looks, which were earneſtly fixed on Ethelreda, had beſtowed the ſlighteſt tokens of curioſity; neither had Carloville reſolved in what way to ſpeak to the ſervants. He was unwilling to truſt them, and vexed to the heart that he had been prevailed on to comply with Ethelreda's extraordinary propoſal; but it was now too late to make uſe of force, and fair means had already been tried in vain.

During the half-hour's profound ſilence which the whole group preſerved, numberleſs revolutions paſſed in the mind of Ethelreda; ſhe had thought to make one more eſſay upon the feelings and humanity of Carloville, and endeavour to prevail on him to allow her ſome leſs dreadful priſon than her paternal manſion. She thought too, as ſhe caſt her eyes towards the faithful and venerable Llewellyn, that there was a degree of barbarity unobſerved before, in making him her jailor, more inſupportable than all. She was repeatedly on the point of hazarding ſome new propoſal, but her ſpirits were too much weakened to ſuffer her to expoſe herſelf to the harſhneſs of a refuſal; and ſhe remained ſilent, in expectation of hearing Carloville give her in charge to Llewellyn.

In the confuſion and anxiety of Llewellyn's mind, ſome faint ideas of Carloville's figure had ſtruck him, though he was conſiderably altered both in ſize and perſon. He was conſcious the man before him was not unknown to him, though his name and connection with the L'Eſterling

terling family he had totally forgotten. In vain he tried to develop his own thoughts; from time to time he looked at Winifred, and at his miſtreſs: at laſt fancying ſhe ſpoke to him, he ventured to ſay, "Madam?"

"I did not ſpeak, Llewellyn;" ſaid Ethelreda faintly, and ſhuddering with apprehenſions at what was to follow.

"I wiſh you would then!" ſaid Carloville impatiently; "it will ſoon be morning, and perhaps you had rather return with me?"

"Oh no!" cried Ethelreda, ſpringing towards the door; "follow me, Llewellyn, inſtantly!"

Llewellyn, haſtily ſnatched up a dimly burning candle, obeyed immediately, and advancing ſome ſteps before his miſtreſs, who pointed acroſs the hall, he ſolemnly and ſlowly marched along, followed by Carloville; and Winifred, fearful of being left alone, with heſitation, leſt ſhe ſhould offend, ventured to attend her.

Carloville, in ſpite of his hitherto unfeeling conduct, could not ſee Ethelreda devoting herſelf to perpetual impriſonment without ſhuddering. Though he wiſhed to ſpeak for the laſt time, and try if it were yet poſſible to prevail on her to give up ſo melancholy a ſcheme, he could not perſuade himſelf that it would not be degrading in the eye of the world to ſubmit to her terms; and more than all, with the ſuſpicious diſtruſt of wickedneſs and impoſition, he thought he could not truſt to the honour of a woman whom he had ſo deeply wronged—and who, he concluded, according to his own ſyſtem of retribution, would not regard herſelf to be revenged on him.

Whilſt Carloville made theſe reflections without coming to any reſolution, the hollow echo of their

their ſlow footſteps as they wound along the narrow paſſages, added a ſolemnity to their proceſſion that ſeemed to impede his ſpeaking; one bat after another flitted by his head as he followed the ruſh candle that diſturbed them from their haunts, though almoſt obſcured by the thick damp vapours that filled the paſſages; the wind whiſtled in low murmurs through the vaulted roofs, and Ethelreda's deep and half-ſuppreſſed ſighs reverberated on his ear like the knell of her funeral. Still, however, he maintained a profound ſilence. Moment after moment he expected to ſee Ethelreda turn back with horror from the dreary proſpect. He thought it impoſſible ſhe ſhould poſſeſs more courage than he did, and more than once he was tempted to return; but ſtill ſhe pointed through long galleries and duſty ſuites of rooms till their way was impeded by a door, which Llewellyn opened, and they found themſelves in the library.

By this time Carloville had loſt all power of ſpeaking, at ſeeing Ethelreda ſo reſolute and ſo firm. She ſtood ſome moments at the door; the reſt hung back, except Llewellyn, who ſtill went forward with his light. At the farther end of the room ſtood a high antique reading-deſk, upon which was placed a large bible in the black letter; where it had remained ſince the days of Sir Roger, who, in imitation of his pious anceſtors, made it his principal ſtudy.

Ethelreda approached the deſk with awe and reverence, and kneeling upon the velvet cuſhion, where her fathers heretofore had performed their matins and veſpers, ſhe remained with her head upon her hands for near a quarter of an hour; whilſt Carloville, unuſed to ſuch ſcenes, waited with increaſing aſtoniſhment till Ethelreda roſe from her knees, and, cloſing the bible, which ſhe

in

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Carloville, in ſpite of his hitherto unfeeling conduct, could not ſee Ethelreda devoting herſelf to perpetual impriſonment without ſhuddering. Though he wiſhed to ſpeak for the laſt time, and try if it were yet poſſible to prevail on her to give up ſo melancholy a ſcheme, he could not perſuade himſelf that it would not be degrading in the eye of the world to ſubmit to her terms; and more than all, with the ſuſpicious diſtruſt of wickedneſs and impoſition, he thought he could not truſt to the honour of a woman whom he had ſo deeply wronged—and who, he concluded, according to his own ſyſtem of retribution, would not regard herſelf to be revenged on him.

Whilſt Carloville made theſe reflections without coming to any reſolution, the hollow echo of their

their ſlow footſteps as they wound along the narrow paſſages, added a ſolemnity to their proceſſion that ſeemed to impede his ſpeaking; one bat after another flitted by his head as he followed the ruſh candle that diſturbed them from their haunts, though almoſt obſcured by the thick damp vapours that filled the paſſages; the wind whiſtled in low murmurs through the vaulted roofs, and Ethelreda's deep and half-ſuppreſſed ſighs reverberated on his ear like the knell of her funeral. Still, however, he maintained a profound ſilence. Moment after moment he expected to ſee Ethelreda turn back with horror from the dreary proſpect. He thought it impoſſible ſhe ſhould poſſeſs more courage than he did, and more than once he was tempted to return; but ſtill ſhe pointed through long galleries and duſty ſuites of rooms till their way was impeded by a door, which Llewellyn opened, and they found themſelves in the library.

By this time Carloville had loſt all power of ſpeaking, at ſeeing Ethelreda ſo reſolute and ſo firm. She ſtood ſome moments at the door; the reſt hung back, except Llewellyn, who ſtill went forward with his light. At the farther end of the room ſtood a high antique reading-deſk, upon which was placed a large bible in the black letter; where it had remained ſince the days of Sir Roger, who, in imitation of his pious anceſtors, made it his principal ſtudy.

Ethelreda approached the deſk with awe and reverence, and kneeling upon the velvet cuſhion, where her fathers heretofore had performed their matins and veſpers, ſhe remained with her head upon her hands for near a quarter of an hour; whilſt Carloville, unuſed to ſuch ſcenes, waited with increaſing aſtoniſhment till Ethelreda roſe from her knees, and, cloſing the bible, which ſhe

in

in vain attempted to lift, aſked Llewellyn, if he ſhould object to taking a ſolemn oath.

Llewellyn placed his candle on the deſk, and, approaching the bible, which he opened, had no ſooner looked intently on the firſt verſe, than, perceiving it was in Engliſh, he declared he could ſwear by no bible but a Welch one. His manner was ſo ſimple, yet ſo decided, that Carloville, in ſpite of the ſerioufneſs of all around him, ſpeedily recovering the natural levity of his diſpoſition, which the ſilence and ſolemnity of the ſcene had ſuppreſſed, burſt into a loud and unceremonious laugh.

A ſound ſo extraordinary ſtartled Llewellyn, and rouſed Ethelreda from the ſtupor in which this unexpected difficulty had plunged her. Though nothing could be eaſier than to procure a Welch bible, Ethelreda's mind was ſo weakened, that this little obſtacle appeared to her the overthrow of all her hopes—and Carloville's laugh, inſult and mockery.

"Is there any thing diverting or ridiculous in my propoſal?" ſaid ſhe.

"Both!" cried Carloville, attempting a gay manner: "your propoſals and your actions are equally diverting; and old Llewellyn is quite farcical. If ſwearing be your plan, why not ſwear by this little book?" taking a volume from the ſhelf: "'tis not half ſo heavy as the large one, 'tis true; but you may make up the deficiency in your oath, and of courſe it will be more binding."

Llewellyn and Winifred both ſtarted in horror at his profaneneſs; and Ethelreda, exaſperated at his unfeeling levity, with her former ſpirit and an unuſual tone of authority ſaid, "You, ſir, have no regard to oaths! But men of integrity, like Llewellyn, on all occaſions are to be truſted on their bare

bare word, at leaſt by me: an oath they do not mention without reverence: I only propoſed one for *your* particular ſatisfaction."

Lord Carloville felt his own humiliating inferiority too forcibly at firſt to expreſs his anger. Shame and rage prevented him from ſpeaking, or looking at Llewellyn and his miſtreſs for ſome moments: at laſt he exclaimed, "I am glad you have told me your real opinion. I will be complaiſant enough to prove to you that it is by no means erroneous; all oaths made to you I am determined to look upon as mere words of courſe —no power upon earth ſhall prevent me now from taking you back to London with me; I do not *ſwear* it, but you ſhall find for once that my bare word is as good as—" Carloville did not finiſh his ſentence with a compariſon ſo degrading to himſelf.

Ethelreda had ſcarcely uttered the raſh ſentence than ſhe repented it, and, dropping on her knees, lifted up her hands in a ſupplicating manner. Carloville did not give her time to ſpeak, but, catching her in his arms, was about to carry her out of the library. She ſcreamed faintly—and Llewellyn inſtantly attempting to reſcue her from this ſtill to him unknown ruffian, either by chance or deſign threw down the candle, and involved them all in utter darkneſs. Carloville, placing Ethelreda on the floor, called out to Llewellyn to lead the way to the door. He had a violent horror of ſpending the night there in intenſe cold and darkneſs; and fearful that Llewellyn ſhould avail himſelf of his inability to follow, he ſuppreſſed the long ſtring of maledictions he had ready on his tongue to beſtow on his awkwardneſs or malice; and after informing him, as a means of raiſing his compaſſion, that his miſtreſs was in a fainting fit (as from her extreme ſtillneſs

Llewellyn

Llewellyn himſelf concluded), and entreating the aſſiſtance of his hand, Carloville at laſt found himſelf in the kitchen, where ſome remains of the fire ſtill continued to burn.

At Carloville's deſire, Llewellyn, lighting another candle, returned alone to aſſiſt Ethelreda, leaving Winifred in the kitchen. After a ſhort abſence, he again returned with his candle blown out, declaring, unleſs the others accompanied him each with candles, there was no chance of their reaching Ethelreda with a light. Thus circumſtanced, Carloville, though reluctantly, was conſtrained to leave the fire; and they once more trod the long galleries, and arrived at the library.

In vain they looked on all ſides for Ethelreda; ſhe was not there—they knew they had not paſſed her in the galleries—there was no eſcape but from the windows, and theſe, at a great height from the ground, ſeemed to threaten certain death to whoever ſhould attempt them. Their conſternation was exceſſive. Llewellyn groaned, but ſaid not a ſyllable. Winifred wept and ſobbed, and ran over every place where ſhe knew it was impoſſible ſhe could have gone, and lamented her ſuppoſed terror and diſtreſs at wandering alone and in the dark: at laſt ſhe concluded ſhe muſt have followed tham, and loſt herſelf by turning up the ſtairs of the little tower at the end of the gallery on the right hand. Carloville, as they returned, called aloud, Ethelreda! The name ſounded in hollow murmurs through the roofs, and was returned again to his ear, accompanied by the owl and the cricket. He concluded ſhe had eſcaped him in the intricate turnings of the galleries, and that ſhe meant to conceal herſelf till ſhe could get out of his power; but ſince he knew ſhe muſt as yet be in the Caſtle, he was reſolved ſhe ſhould not elude his vigilance.

vigilance. In the little tower they looked in vain: in vain they went through every apartment, and ſearched every receſs, tower, and even large cheſt; when going down a flight of ſtairs in the left wing of the Caſtle, at the bottom of which was a door leading into the court, Llewellyn exclaimed it was unbolted, and that there ſhe muſt have eſcaped whilſt he returned to re-light his candle. Carloville inſtantly opened it, and ran a few paces into the court, and then returned to examine the ſnow; but his own footſteps had deſtroyed its ſmooth ſurface, and, unable to diſtinguiſh exactly whether any other track had been left, he ſtill retained his uncertainty. There was in effect no other mode of accounting for her diſappearance; and Carloville, knowing her to be totally deſtitute of money; and thinking it impoſſible ſhe could, thus circumſtanced, leave the neighbourhood of the Caſtle, or remain long in it undiſcovered, gave up all idea of a ſearch that night, in which he could only ſuppoſe Llewellyn would miſlead him. It would too have materially interfered with his plan of returning with the tide as ſecretly as he came, with an intention of coming openly in a few days to take poſſeſſion of the Caſtle.

Therefore, after having told the petrified Llewellyn who he was, and after having given ſome menacing charges not to ſecrete his wife upon the peril of the law, he obliged both him and Winifred to ſwear never to divulge what had paſſed in their preſence; and towards five in the morning he once more embarked with the apprehenſion of a more dangerous voyage than that he had already made, which, notwithſtanding the riſing of the wind, and the increaſed roughneſs of the ſea, he performed ſafely—and without having raiſed any other

other ſuſpicions amongſt the mariners, than that he and the companion whom he had left behind were ſmugglers.

CHAP. XXXII.

———there's no art
To find the mind's conſtruction in the face.
SHAKESPEARE.

CARLOVILLE loſt no time on the road in his return to London. As he drew near, he felt ſome kind of perplexity at the idea of encountering Harwood, whom he imagined in all probability he ſhould meet; and even the thought of ſeeing Sir Francis L'Eſterling under the awkward circumſtances of having a few lies to tell, and a few falſe explanations to make, with an unvarying countenance, made him feel a kind of embarraſſment extremely unpleaſant, and to which he had never been ſubject. At the ſame time he was very far from ſuſpecting he was aſhamed of himſelf.

On the night of his arrival he could come to no reſolution: however, towards morning (for he ſlept but little) a ſcheme occurred to him, which appeared ſo extremely plauſible, he delayed not to put it in execution as ſoon as he had breakfaſted. It was the application to Sir Francis L'Eſterling for information of Lady Carloville's abode, which ſucceeded ſo completely in perplexing him, and miſleading Harwood as to Ethelreda's real deſtiny.

tiny. When Sir Francis laſt ſaw Carloville, which was only for the ſecond or third time in his life (for he had been diſcarded by Lord Trecaſtle, as Lady Mariamne's lover, before Sir Francis thought of preferring his ſuit), his figure, a little above middle ſize, though rather inclining to corpulent, was far from inelegant, and his face what is uſually termed handſome, but upon the whole what phyſiognomiſts would have pronounced a bad countenance; and though near thirty years old, his light hair and fair complexion uſually made him paſs for twenty-five. He had now entirely loſt his youthful look, his face evidently exhibited tokens of hard drinking, and the increaſed dimenſions of his perſon made him reaſonably be taken for a man of forty. It was not therefore to be wondered at that he appeared to Sir Francis an utter ſtranger, nor would the matter have been elucidated, but for the accidental meeting of De Clerac, by whoſe means, and Caerleon's, the conference with Harwood took place, and the conſequent explanation; for every circumſtance concerning him, except thoſe that the public papers had detailed, remained a profound ſecret, though entruſted to a *woman!* for Carloville had made but one confidant, to whom, tho' injudiciouſly choſen, and more from neceſſity than prudence, he was determined to adhere.—It was no other than Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling.

When Carloville, after the death of Sir Roger, diſcovered he had married a portionleſs wife, he reſolved privately to make his eſcape to the Continent, in order to avoid the clamour of his creditors, and the certainty of a priſon. He was too well acquainted with the ſteady temper of his father, to hope any thing from him for the preſent or in future; his marriage, he knew, as it involved an innocent and amiable perſon in his deſerved chaſtiſe-

chaſtiſements, would rather irritate his anger, than ſoothe him to forgiveneſs: he therefore never gave his family any intimation of his connection with the L'Eſterlings, and conſequently aroſe the apparent neglect with which Ethelreda was treated by the family of Carloville; who, though he had every reaſon to believe he was diſinherited of every alienable part of his father's property, by much the moſt conſiderable, yet as he was not abſolutely certain of this latter point, he knew any freſh outrage on his part would certainly determine his fate. In the mean time, he hoped his father's declining health and weakened ſpirits would ward off his purpoſe till the whole was determined.

Having weighed all theſe circumſtances in his mind, and as ſelf was always predominant with him, he took his meaſures accordingly. His deſign was to become one in a gaming aſſociation—combinations of robbers that at that time abounded on the Continent—that he might not be without reſources when the price of his commiſſion was exhauſted. But firſt, as a preliminary of conſequence, he took the precaution to change his name, and with the aſſumed one of De Winterfeldt, and the uniform of a German officer, ſpent his time very profitably. It was in theſe ſocieties that from time to time he met with the Count de Clerac-Auxerre, whom he pillaged without mercy; and in conſequence of the formerly-related quarrel with Lord Caerleon, he was wounded, and left for dead.

He fainted from the bleeding of his wound, but the cold air of the night ſpeedily recovered him; and finding his hurt but trifling, he immediately thought of returning to his lodgings. It is certain no man was ever more artful, or poſſeſſed a readier invention, than Carloville. He no longer

ſmarted

ſmarted under the pain of his wound, for his fertile imagination had already converted the accident to his advantage. Having furniſhed himſelf with all the money he poſſeſſed, which amounted to a pretty conſiderable ſum, he ſtopped at the houſe of a ſurgeon, got his arm dreſſed, went poſt to Oſtend, and croſſed in the ſame packet with Lord Caerleon: though each was too much diſguiſed, and too careful of himſelf, to diſcover the other. Carloville's firſt care on his arrival was to ſend the before-mentioned paragraph concerning his death to the printer. The advantages he expected to derive from this new artifice were not inconſiderable. In the firſt place, the ſtory of his death, which no one could diſprove, and which Lord Caerleon at any rate would look upon as certain, would ſet aſide the neceſſity of a will in his brother's favour, which he knew his father either had or intended making; and though William Carloville would at firſt inherit as heir, yet there would be no difficulty in making his appearance whenever it was neceſſary; and if, as he hoped, his ſuppoſed death ſet aſide the intention of making a will in his brother's favour, he might *then* come into full poſſeſſion of *all* his eſtates, without any troubleſome incumbrances for his brother's maintenance, whoſe poverty, he hoped, would ſtimulate him to ſhine in his profeſſion of the law. And laſtly, with a ſuſpicion natural to him, having taken it into his head that Ethelreda had ſums concealed unknown to him, he concluded, if his plot failed in the firſt inſtance, it would ſucceed in the laſt; for, as his ſuppoſed death would preclude the neceſſity of any longer concealment, it would be in his power to ſeize on this imaginary property with law and right on his ſide.

Yet days and weeks rolled on. Carloville ſaw his ill-gotten gains decline apace, and ſtill Ethelreda was living in dependence in the family of Harwood. Slightly as he knew her, yet he was too well convinced of her ſpirit to ſuppoſe any other ſituation was in her power; he therefore owned to himſelf with grief, that this advantage had been falſely eſtimated. Still too the unhappy Lord Carloville lingered out a life of ſuffering. In vain his conſiderate ſon, unuſed to pray for himſelf, begged his ſpeedy releaſe. Poverty, which he had hitherto ſhunned by peculation and crimes, now ſtared him in the face, and he was reduced to the neceſſity of ſubmitting to the dreadful evil, or of giving up all his bright dreams of the future, by returning to his old occupation of gameſter.

Thus perplexed with preſent horrors and future hopes, Carloville could come to no reſolution whilſt a few pounds remained in his poſſeſſion; when the far-famed gala which Sir Francis had in agitation ſuggeſted a deſperate expedient to the ſubtle Carloville. Having calculated the expences of a journey into Wales, he expended all the overplus in a maſquerade habit, and, on the appointed day, arrived at Kilgaren-hall, where he ſoon found a convenient opportunity of introducing himſelf to Lady Mariamne.

A man with a ſmaller ſhare of effrontery and leſs art would have deſpaired of ſucceſs on ſuch an occaſion; nor indeed would he have dared to riſk his whole plot upon the reception he ſhould meet from a woman whom he had highly exaſperated, and who conſidered herſelf as injured and affronted. But Carloville, who was thoroughly convinced of her former partiality, and was no ſtranger to the paſſionate jealouſy of her temper, made light of every obſtacle, and, founding his chief hope

hope upon his own ſkill in flattery, and the above-mentioned preference, already reckoned upon her money and her ſilence. His vanity would not ſuffer him to acknowledge, even to himſelf, that her hatred of Ethelreda, and her threats of revenge when firſt ſhe heard of his marriage, were more powerful advocates in favour of his projects than any influence he could now boaſt.

Having fortified himſelf to bear whole torrents of reproaches and floods of anger, he followed Lady Mariamne, who wore no maſk, into all the moſt retired parts of the gardens, to procure himſelf an opportunity of ſpeaking to her. His aſſiduity had not eſcaped her notice; and having her full ſhare of curioſity, ſhe at laſt walked ſlowly to the houſe, and was followed by Carloville into one of the rooms, where no preparations had been made for the company. Carloville with uncommon adroitneſs began by reproaching her with her marriage; lamented his own miſery with ſo much volubility, and involved her in ſo much perplexity and aſtoniſhment when he concluded by calling himſelf the ruined unhappy Carloville, that for the ſpace of ten minutes he eſcaped the thunder of invectives collecting on the tongue of the amazed lady.

"How," cried ſhe, as ſoon as ſhe could ſpeak, "do you dare to inſult me here? faithleſs and mercenary as you are!"

"Mercenary!—mercenary!" repeated Carloville: "Ah, Lady Mariamne! Are you not miſtreſs of ten thouſand a-year?"

"And what induced me to marry Sir Francis," cried ſhe, exaſperated to the laſt degree, "but your perfidy?"

"I tell you again, deareſt Lady Mariamne! nothing but Sir Francis's certain aſſurances of ſucceſs could have prevailed on me to relinquiſh

you but with my life; but when not only your family, but you, withdrew your countenance——"

"If Sir Francis—if he has miſled me," ſaid the credulous Lady with a choked utterance—— "I am too unfortunate!"

"I came for no other purpoſe," continued Carloville, "than to ſee you once more. It was impoſſible to reſiſt the deſire of ſpeaking to you ——to hear the ſound of your voice for the laſt time, though it were to ſee you exulting in my misfortunes; I will not conceal them from you. You ſee me reduced to poverty; but of that I do not complain; my wretchedneſs is the effect of your cruel deſertion."

With ſuch artful ſpeeches having calmed the rage of Lady Mariamne, Carloville imparted his ſchemes to her; explained the advantages he expected to reap from his ſuppoſed death; and, as he ſaid, relying on the noble generoſity of her temper, ventured to aſk her ſilence and aſſiſtance.

The latter ſhe was rather unwilling to afford him; but finding he was not ill diſpoſed to believe a thouſand malicious hints againſt the character of Ethelreda, which ſhe had invented, ſhe was at laſt prevailed on to truſt him with a conſiderable ſum, in hopes ſhe was laying the foundation of Ethelreda's humiliation and miſery; particularly as, on the falſehoods ſhe had whiſpered, Carloville artfully mentioned the word divorce; not that he believed a ſyllable to the prejudice of Ethelreda, and leſs from any confidence in her virtue—for he was not apt to truſt any one—than from the knowledge he had of Lady Mariamne's malice and love of invention. He was, however, charmed with his own ingenuity, which had exculpated himſelf, impoſed on the lady, laid the whole blame on Sir Francis, and procured him a pocket-book

full

full of bank-notes——the ſole end and purpoſe of his errand.

As for Lady Mariamne, ſhe was bent on taking the firſt opportunity of revenging herſelf on Sir Francis, for having ſo artfully, as ſhe thought, ſupplanted her firſt lover; and knowing nothing could touch him ſo nearly as the bouleverſement of his fête, ſhe played off that ſucceſsful hyſteric fit, which afforded her ſo fair an opportunity of ſeparating from her huſband, and of joining her collegue in London:——whilſt Sir Francis, totally innocent of all that Carloville had laid to his charge, ſince his acquaintance did not commence till Carloville's had ended, was the firſt ſufferer in conſequence of this extraordinary coalition.

During this eventful evening Carloville had beſtowed ſome ſhare of his watching, as well as of his admiration, on his wife; he was not a little chagrined at ſeeing her depart with a handſome young man, whoſe perſon was unknown to him.

It was ſome time before he could procure a carriage to follow them; and owing to their ſpeed, and his delay, he did not arrive till after the marriage of Conway and Ethelreda, and diſcovered them at the gate of the myrtle-garden juſt as Conway was departing. The poſture of his ſchemes would not allow him to diſcover himſelf at that moment, though an appearance ſo ſuſpicious gave credit to all Lady Mariamne's inſinuations, and prompted him to loſe no time in revenging the imaginary injury. But, circumſtanced as he was, and preferring the accommodations which money can procure to every other conſideration, he poſtponed his anger till he could make ſure of his victims without any detriment to himſelf, perſonal or imperſonal; and having thus commodiouſly arranged his reſentment, he made an undiſcovered retreat to London.

In

In about two months after this event, Carloville, by means of the public papers, received tidings of his father's deceaſe. Owing to the proving and regiſtering of the will, his ſuſpenſe was ſtill prolonged ſome days; but he was amply repaid for all his ſufferings of mind, upon finding no legacy of conſequence mentioned in it, but the one to Mrs. Carloville, with a number of triſling ones to ſervants; but neither his own name nor his brother's was inſerted, though blanks were left which had never been filled up. The date was not a very late one; ſo that it was doubtful what names were originally intended. The codicil in which the fatal legacy was made, was evidently a very late addition; from which Carloville concluded his ſtratagem had anſwered his moſt ſanguine expectations. There now remained but one motive for concealment. Ethelreda was ſtill at liberty. It was therefore agreed between Carloville and his confidante, that nothing ſhould tranſpire till ſhe was in his power; and having once ſecured her perſon, and the important legacy, it would not be difficult for him to inſtall himſelf in all his honours, dignities and eſtates. Twenty thouſand pounds, he thought, would identify any man's perſon, ſhould his brother think proper to queſtion his; which, from the complete alteration it had undergone, judging from the corruption of his own heart, he thought by no means improbable.

From Lady Octavia, Mrs. Carloville's arrival was immediately known to Lady Mariamne, who, without loſs of time, communicated the important information to her confederate. The report of her being near dying, raiſed a momentary joy in the boſom of Lady Mariamne, when ſhe thought Lord Carloville would be at liberty; but ſhe ſoon recollected ſuch an event could be of

no

conſequence to her. The reflection was not calculated to reſtore Sir Francis to her Ladyſhip's good graces. It was therefore merely to ſerve her own purpoſes that ſhe made a ſhow of reconciliation, by accepting the invitation to the bal maſqué; for Carloville having called in the morning in Groſvenor-ſquare, and having been refuſed admittance under the pretence that Mrs. Carloville was not at home, it immediately occurred to Lady Mariamne that the whole was a ſtratagem. She inſtantly ſurmiſed ſome intended appointment; and as ſhe poſſeſſed by much the moſt Machiavelian abilities of the whole Conway family, ſhe with equal dexterity and ſucceſs deviſed the note which was to operate on the weak ſilly mind of Octavia, and which eventually drew Ethelreda into their toils.

CHAP. XXXIII.

——a little wight
Of wither'd aſpect; but his eye was keen,
With ſweetneſs mix'd—
He crept along, unpromiſing of mien.
Groſs he who judges ſo. His ſoul was fair,
Bright as the children of yon azure ſheen;
True comelineſs, which nothing can impair,
Dwells in the mind——all elſe is vanity and glare.

THOMSON.

MR. Conway, having been confirmed in all his ſurmiſes by his nephew, immediately went to Captain

Captain Conway's lodgings. He was vexed, but not much ſurpriſed, to hear he had not been ſeen there for many days. He began to have ſome fears as to the event of his ſearch, and to apprehend that Conway had concealed himſelf as well as Ethelreda—when it occurred to him very juſtly, that the only mode of proceeding with any ſucceſs would be to acquaint Mr. Harwood with what he ſuſpected; and, ignorant of Harwood's being in London, he went to Sir Francis L'Eſterling's in order to procure himſelf the neceſſary information towards effecting his purpoſe. From Sir Francis, who could talk of nothing but the ſtrange event that had juſt happened in his family, Mr. Conway heard the ſtory of Carloville's return, of Ethelreda's ſeparation from her family, and of Harwood's arrival in London. Such a train of circumſtances were not calculated to remove Mr. Conway's ſuſpicions of his ſon and Ethelreda, particularly as he found upon enquiry that Sir Francis had ſeen nothing of him ſince the night of the maſquerade: he therefore returned to his own houſe, to deviſe ſome plan of diſcovering his ſon's retreat, and, if poſſible, of ſecuring his perſon upon ſome pretence or other.

In the mean time Harwood, whoſe impatience to be gone increaſed in proportion as the neceſſity of his ſtay in London decreaſed, having received a promiſe from Conway that he would follow him with all poſſible ſpeed, took his departure in the morning long before day-light.

Conway, whoſe pride would not ſuffer him to confeſs to Harwood the ſtraitened ſtate of his finances, was upon this laſt account obliged to poſtpone his journey for ſome hours, in expectation of an anſwer to a note he had reluctantly written to his mother, requeſting her aſſiſtance,

and

and informing her of his intended excurſion. This note was unfortunately given into Mr. Conway's hands, who himſelf carried it to his lady; and having waited till ſhe had read it, upon the preſumption it was from his ſon, he requeſted to be allowed the ſame liberty. The note contained all the information Mr. Conway had been in want of, namely, the place of his abode; he perceived too that Conway was in want of money, and he knew him to be in debt: all circumſtances concurring to favour his deſigns. Having therefore told Mrs. Conway that he himſelf would anſwer the note (by which ſhe apprehended, as he intended ſhe ſhould, that he would ſupply Conway with the ſum he had aſked for), he departed in order to put his tyrannical and cruel meaſures into execution.

It grew late in the day however, and Conway waited in anxiety for ſome anſwer to his note, impatient to depart, yet dreading to ſee Ethelreda, ſince he knew it muſt be for the laſt time. The expected anſwer however did not arrive; and Conway, ſurpriſed extremely at the delay, and vexed at what in his petulance appeared to him his mother's coolneſs, departed from the reſolution he had made not to go to his father's houſe; but concluding he ſhould only ſee his mother for a moment, towards evening he went out alone, intending to go to Portman-ſquare.

He had ſcarcely walked a ſtreet's length, when he was rather rudely ſtopped by a man, who aſked if he were not Captain Conway?—Conway ſaid, "Yes!" without beſtowing a look on the enquirer; and was walking on, when another ill-looking fellow, placing himſelf in his way, told him as civilly as he could that he had a writ againſt him.

Such an interruption, ſo unexpected yet ſo deciſive, was a thunder-ſtroke to Conway. For the ſpace of a moment or two he ſtood immoveable in the ſame ſpot without endeavouring to eſcape, though he was ſufficiently powerful to cope with either or both of his antagoniſts; but ſuch an idea never entered his head. To have recourſe to his father was the firſt thought that ſtruck him; and not till then did he feel in its full extent the extreme raſhneſs and folly he had been guilty of, in quarrelling with him ſo irretrievably, to whom, notwithſtanding the ſcanty allowance that reduced him to the neceſſity in former exigences of a ſimilar nature, he had never made an unſucceſsful application. He for the firſt time began to think it would not have been ſo degrading to have temporized as he had hitherto conſidered it, particularly as his ſituation at their laſt conference allowed of no other mode of preſerving his favour. But he had loſt the opportunity, and it was now too late, had he been inclined, to ſacrifice his highly prized ſincerity to intereſt. He reluctantly and for a moment thought of Lord Beralſton, who he knew would inſtantly have releaſed him; but the idea of obligation was ſo repugnant, that he felt no diſappointment when he recollected his friend's abſence from London.

The two bailiffs, who had repeated the queſtion, "Should they call a coach?" rouſed him from his momentary reverie; and the laſt expedient, which to have been effectual ſhould have been the firſt, occurred to him, that of making his eſcape. It was the only time Conway's mind had ever ſuggeſted to him a diſhonourable intention; and even now, though it preſented itſelf without the ſmalleſt idea of fraud, he would have rejected it with ſcorn, had not the certainty of

of never ſeeing Ethelreda again been annexed to the determination. He glanced his eyes rapidly round him to obſerve which ſide was moſt favourable to his retreat, when he perceived himſelf on all ſides ſurrounded: every paſſenger had ſtood to look at him, as the lamps clearly ſhowed his fine perſon and elegant appearance, which, together with his agitation, and his two attendants, made him an object of curioſity. Shame, if it were poſſible, added to his deſpair and anguiſh; and dreading leſt his ſituation ſhould become more public, he ſurrendered himſelf to the officers, relinquiſhing, with a groan he could not ſuppreſs, all hopes of Ethelreda for ever. Amidſt the condolence of the mob, which ſeemed to hint its connivance at his eſcape ſhould he attempt it, by lamenting that ſo fine a young man ſhould fall into ſuch hands, Conway placed himſelf in a coach, too much ſtupefied and overwhelmed with the complicated miſery of his ſituation, to attend to or comprehend the good-natured but lawleſs inſinuation of the crowd that would willingly have reſcued him.

It had coſt Mr. Conway's pride many ſevere ſtruggles before he could reſolve upon meaſures ſo degrading; but though a politician, and of courſe fertile in ſtratagems, it was the only effective one that preſented itſelf to his imagination. The want of money alone he looked upon as a very inconſiderable bar to the purpoſes of a man ſo determined as Conway; and whoſe known conſequence and connections would at any time procure it for him, had he been diſpoſed to make uſe of them. But to prevent him from ſeeing Ethelreda he was reſolved; and ſince every conſideration appeared to him trifling compared to that, he overlooked the indignity he offered *himſelf* in cauſing his ſon to be arreſted.

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The ſucceſs of his project however was no ſooner communicated to Mr. Conway, than he began to repent it had been carried into execution; as, from the account of the bailiffs ſtrongly correſponding with that he received a few nights before from Mr. Harwood's ſervant, and to which he had ſo ſagaciouſly refuſed to give credit, he began to believe his unfortunate ſon was actually deranged in his intellects; and this idea, joined to his own harſhneſs, had nearly produced the ſame effect upon himſelf. Mrs. Conway, too, whoſe reproaches he deſervedly dreaded, though he longed to aſk her attendance for her ſon, he knew not how to inform of his deplorable ſituation. Without coming to any reſolution, he paſſed the whole night in walking his room, in an agitation of mind little ſhort of diſtraction; whilſt Conway, actually raving with his diſappointment, which had at firſt ſtupefied him, furniſhed his jailor, and with ſome probability, with additional proofs of his madneſs; which being communicated to Mr. Conway in the morning, left him without any alternative but that of keeping him confined, ſince his releaſe muſt proclaim his ſituation to Mrs. Conway and to the world.

Mr. Conway's ſufferings, though ſevere, were not greater than he deſerved. The ſenſe of decency that had prevented him from ſtimulating his ſon's creditors in his own character, only ſerved to ſhew him more clearly in what light his conduct would appear to the world, when it ſhould be known (as, if his confinement continued, it muſt be), that Captain Conway had been confined for debts which none but a young man (of Conway's ſituation) improperly curbed in his finances could have incurred: eſpecially as the world, to Mr. Conway's own knowledge, and to whoſe opinion he was too apt to bow implicitly,

plicitly, had never pronounced him an extravagant man or a gambler. It is true it had univerſally concurred in calling him generous, which in his father's opinion was almoſt equivalent to extravagant; but ſince the *world* had choſen to alter the term, no ſubſtantial plea or excuſe remained for him, and he found himſelf in danger of hearing his conduct arraigned and reprobated by every ſpendthrift, who would make no ſcruple at the ſame time to call his *frugality* avaricious meanneſs.

Thus forced againſt his will to repent his meaſures, and hampered by their effects, Mr. Conway ſuffered two more days to elapſe without taking any methods to procure Conway's enlargement, or even his removal. It is true he had ordered him a phyſician—but, fearful of publiſhing the ſtory by recommending one of eminence, he left it to their own choice, and, after ſome debates with himſelf as to the riſk of a diſcovery, ventured to pay his ſon a viſit.

Since Conway's impriſonment, he had refuſed almoſt conſtantly to take any nouriſhment; nor had he ſwallowed any thing ſcarcely but water, nor taken any kind of reſt; he had raved and been calm by turns.

When Mr. Conway entered the room, at the ſide oppoſite the door ſtood Conway, leaning againſt the wall, with his hands behind him; and near him a reverend looking old man in a ſhabby black coat, but whoſe benevolent countenance gave ſo much luſtre to his appearance, that in ſome eyes it would have paſſed for a robe of ſtate. He was earneſtly entreating permiſſion to feel his pulſe, which Conway, with his eyes fixed wildly on the door, was civilly but poſitively refuſing. Mr. Conway was too much ſhocked at his haggard countenance to advance or ſpeak to him.

him. Conway looked ſlightly at his father, but apparently without recollecting him: he bowed, however, as at the entrance of a ſtranger, and was perſiſting in his refuſal to the phyſician, whom from time to time he thanked for his trouble, when the turnkey ventured to ſhew his face from behind Mr. Conway, where he had ſheltered himſelf, Conway in an inſtant ſprung towards him: but the wary jailor, forcibly dragging Mr. Conway on the outſide, ſecured the door, and requeſted him not to repeat his viſit till the priſoner was calmer—declaring he never entered the room but at the hazard of his life. Mr. Conway wanted no perſuaſion to depart; but he wiſhed to hear the opinion of the phyſician, who at length made his appearance, and pronounced his patient in a delirious fever. Mr. Conway, not much impreſſed by his worn coat, rather ſcornfully preſented him his fee; which the old gentleman mildly declining, to Mr. Conway's infinite aſtoniſhment, aſked, as if fearful of diſtreſſing him by the queſtion, "Whether he was related to the young gentleman, and whether he could direct him to his creditors?"

Mr. Conway was too much embarraſſed to ſpeak.

"His mind ſeems very much oppreſſed. I wiſh it may be in my power," continued the benevolent old man, "to remove him from hence, if his debts are not *very* heavy."

"Pray, ſir," cried Mr. Conway, "let me beg—" ſtill preſenting his purſe, "let me entreat you not to think of any ſuch thing!"

"Pardon me, ſir!" ſaid the old gentleman timidly; "you ſeem to know ſomething of this young man. I would not be thought inquiſitive—but if his friends cannot—if he be not deſerving of ſuch a puniſhment——"

"Neither

"Neither, ſir!" cried Mr. Conway, raiſing his voice from ſhame and anger.

"Then nothing ſhall prevent me, if his friends renounce him unjuſtly, from aſſiſting him to the utmoſt of my abilities," rejoined the phyſician.

"You force me to tell you, ſir," ſaid Mr. Conway throwing down his pocket-book, "that you have no right to preſs an obligation upon ——" *my ſon*, he was on the point of ſaying: but his prudence overcame his pride, as the phyſician's generoſity had already conquered his avarice; for the pocket-book contained more than treble the ſum required; though it is a matter of doubt whether the phyſician's example would have been efficacious, had not Mr. Conway felt his own riches and conſequence, though he was unknown, inſulted by the offer. He immediately departed, without ſtaying to give any directions for the diſpoſal of the overplus, though the phyſician called after him to beg his addreſs, than to give which nothing was farther from his intentions.

When the phyſician returned to his patient, which he did immediately after the departure of Mr. Conway, he found him more tractably inclined, though leſs reaſonable. With ſome little trouble he was perſuaded to go to bed: and the good doctor, who began to be particularly intereſted for him when he heard him in his delirium talk of his wife, and call himſelf Conway, determined to ſtay with him the whole night, in the benevolent hope of gathering ſomething of his ſtory from his ravings, in order to render him every aſſiſtance in his power. The name of Conway, as he *imagined*, had diſcovered to him the moſt material part of Conway's hiſtory; for he was the ſame phyſician who attended Ethel-

reda

reda when ſhe was carried away by Carloville, and who had in ſome of her moments of delirium repeated his name inceſſantly.

Dr. Felton was a man of ſingular diſpoſition: he delighted in ſcenes of diſtreſs, becauſe he placed his greateſt pleaſure in relieving them. He was, too, ſo averſe to receiving any teſtimonies of gratitude from thoſe he had aſſiſted, that he continually changed his name and place of abode, to evade every chance of meeting again with the very few who were inclined to go beyond bare expreſſions of gratitude.

He had lived ſome time within the rules of the King's-Bench, from whence he had diſcharged a few poor debtors, and viſited all the ſick, when Ethelreda was brought by Carloville to lodgings he had fixed upon for her. The people of the houſe no ſooner perceived ſhe was ſick, than they applied to Dr. Bevan, as he then called himſelf, who, according to his benevolent cuſtom, viſited her, and ſupplied her with medicines. Her ſudden diſappearance, after he had attended her two days, vexed him extremely; and the bank-note for his attendance, which he had no poſſible means of returning, ſeriouſly diſtreſſed him; as he concluded, from the ſolitary appearance of a woman ſo young and beautiful, that ſome embarraſſments muſt occaſion it.

Conway, therefore, whoſe wild ravings would otherwiſe have paſſed with the Doctor for the fantaſtic and accidental expreſſions of diſtraction, no ſooner pronounced his own name, than the extraordinary coincidence between his delirium and that of Ethelreda, ſuggeſted and confirmed the opinion at the ſame moment, that Conway's friends had either oppoſed their union, or cauſed their ſeparation. Such a ſurmiſe was of itſelf ſufficient to ſecure all the pity and good offices in the

the power of the Doctor to beſtow; which joined to the intereſting appearance of the two perſons who ſeparately had been thrown upon his care, made him reſolve to exert himſelf for the re-eſtabliſhment of Conway's health and future happineſs.

Mr. Conway, in returning to his own houſe, could think only of his ſon's madneſs; for he placed but little reliance on the ſkill of a phyſician who wore a ſhabby coat; and inſtead of believing it was a delirious fever, he concluded his indiſpoſition was a confirmed derangement; he was therefore particularly uneaſy at the thoughts of ſeeing him at liberty; and not able to deviſe any expedient to confine his ſon privately without the concurrence of this aſſuming phyſician, who thought proper to pay the debts of people in his ſtation, he was much againſt his will obliged to appoint another conference. Mr. Conway, who gave the phyſician to underſtand he only interfered as the friend of his patient's family, could nevertheleſs but indifferently conceal the grief and anxiety with which he heard the Doctor's account of Conway's alarming phrenſy; and when he heard of his raving of Ethelreda and his marriage, he could not forbear from making exclamations of horror, which were all ſet down by the unſuſpecting Dr. Felton to the ſcore of humanity. The Doctor ventured to hint his ſuſpicions of Conway's ſituation, as from his diſtraction he had partly gathered it; and Mr. Conway finding it neceſſary to range the Doctor on his ſide, informed him of the previous marriage of the lady, and of courſe the neceſſity of a ſeparation. The Doctor, though grieved beyond meaſure at the melancholy ſtory, concurred with Mr. Conway in ſome plans he propoſed. It was his intention, with the Doctor's aſſiſtance,

to

to ſend his ſon to Frampton-lodge, a ſmall ſporting-ſeat in the mountains, at ſome diſtance from Strathener Caſtle, till he recovered his madneſs, as he called it. He was, too, extremely preſſing that Conway ſhould be inveigled to begin the journey immediately; but the Doctor, who uniformly called the diſorder a fever, declared the patient's life very uncertain at beſt, but abſolutely loſt if he were removed till after the near-approaching criſis of the malady.

CHAP. XXXIV.

He that has light within his own clear breaſt
May ſit i'th' centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark ſoul and foul thoughts,
Benighted walks under the mid-day ſun;
Himſelf is his own dungeon.—

COMUS.

AFTER Lord Carloville's departure from the Caſtle, Llewellyn renewed his ſearch for Ethelreda. Though he favoured Carloville's opinion of her having eſcaped, he himſelf was ſatisfied ſhe was ſtill in the Caſtle; though even he, acquainted as he was with every winding and corner of it, was at a loſs and bewildered where he ſhould ſearch for her. He had recollected from the moment of her being miſſed, that in ſeveral rooms of the Caſtle were deep cavities in the walls, ſome of which were ſecured by doors, and others only hidden by the tapeſtry. Theſe deep

deep hollow dungeons, which appeared to run like chimnies from the top to the very foundation of the building, had never been explored in Llewellyn's time; nor indeed was there any poſſible mode, apparently, of deſcending thoſe into which in former days he had ventured to peep, except by ropes or pulleys. If therefore Ethelreda had miſtaken her way, and fallen into one of theſe caverns, her death was the inevitable conſequence. But how to relieve himſelf from the miſerable anxiety he ſuffered from the ſuppoſition, Llewellyn did not know: for his head was ſo crammed with the ſtories of ghoſts, that when he lifted up the tapeſtry at the lower end of the library, and ſaw a deep hole, dark as the grave, into which his lantern caſt no ray of light to encourage his proceeding, he almoſt died with fear. It was not till after repeated efforts he could raiſe his voice ſo as to hear it himſelf; and the deep hollow groans which were echoed back to him from the bottom of the dungeon were not calculated to diſpel his horror. Whilſt Llewellyn ſtood heſitating, and leaning with one hand againſt the rugged wall, with his eyes poring into the black diſmal gulf, a ſmall looſened ſtone gave way, and he heard it fall two or three times as if from ſtep to ſtep; a ſecond experiment confirmed the fact, for he reckoned a larger ſtone roll down ſix ſteps, and ſtop as at a little diſtance. Nothing was wanting now but more light; and Winifred having ſupplied herſelf with an additional lantern, which from the damps that hovered round them beſtowed a very ſmall portion of light, they groped their way down a ſtone ſtaircaſe of about half a dozen ſteps. A low narrow paſſage at leaſt forty feet in length next preſented itſelf, at the end of which a gleam of moon-light through an aperture in the wall diſcovered the beginning of another

another flight of ſteps; theſe they deſcended, and, as at the termination of the preceding, appeared another paſſage ſtill longer, at the diſtant end of which they heard footſteps: and as they advanced ſomething ran, or rather flitted, from them towards the end of the gallery; when another gleam of light ſhewed Llewellyn, who preceded his wife, a figure which he believed to be no other than the Pilgrim Knight of Famaguſta, who was on his way back to his ſepulchre in Cyprus before day-break, after having paid his accuſtomed viſit to his caſtle, and the for ever ſeparate vault of his anceſtors.

Though Llewellyn began to tremble in every joint, and had a violent inclination to turn back, yet he had no ſooner ventured to look behind him, than, fancing he ſaw the gleamy helmet of Sir Reginald the Knight Templar, he was conſtrained to quicken his peace—not in ſo much fear of being obliged to join company with the Pilgrim, who he concluded was already many miles off, as of being overtaken by the Templar, particularly as he heard him clanking down the ſteps in his iron gyves at a great rate. Under ſuch an impreſſion of fear, Llewellyn, in ſpite of his age, had preſently left Winifred behind him, had not ſhe, though not aware of the horrors that ſpurred her huſband, quickened her pace in proportion: but, notwithſtanding his terror, he began to be weary of running thro' a rugged vault which appeared to be endleſs, and which, from his knowledge of its limits, muſt already have extended beyond the confines of the Caſtle. Add to which, the candles in their lanterns, that from their ſmall ſize burned ſpeedily, began to wink in their ſockets. They were unprovided for ſuch a diſaſter: the mercileſs Templar ſtill clanked behind, or rather the echo of their footſteps ſtill followed them, when Llewellyn

wellyn ſtumbled and almoſt fell by ſtriking his feet againſt ſomething that impeded his progreſs. He lifted up his dying lantern, and ſaw they had now to aſcend ſteps. He had already advanced a little way, when the falling of a ponderous weight above him, which was accompanied by a guſt of wind, fanned out the before departing flame of their candles, and almoſt annihilated them.

There was now no hope of a retreat, and nothing was to be expected from day-light, as they had long taken leave of the little loops that let in the glimmering of the moon. Llewellyn ſtood ſome moments to breathe; then all at once collecting courage from the dead ſilence that prevailed, with violent expedition he gained the top, ſo overcome with terror and exertion, that, unable to ſupport himſelf, he fell with his whole weight againſt a heavy nailed door, whoſe ruſty mouldering lock gave way, and he found himſelf in the watch-tower——at the feet of Ethelreda!

It was Winifred ſpeaking to her huſband who firſt diſcovered to the terrified Ethelreda, who were her purſuers; for at the violent intruſion of Llewellyn ſhe haſtily retreated to the farther end of the room, where a ſmall grated window helped to ſhow her pale and trembling form to the overjoyed Winifred. "My dear lady, is it you? Have we found you?" ſaid ſhe, approaching her miſtreſs.

"Oh! Winifred! who is following?" cried Ethelreda, panting and breathleſs with her terror and flight. "Are you alone? Am I ſafe?" repeated ſhe.

"Here is no one, madam, but your faithful ſervant Llewellyn," ſaid the old man, advancing towards the window.

"And

"And where are the lights that purſued me through the vault?" ſaid Ethelreda, ſtill fearing ſomething behind.

Winifred and Llewellyn both aſſured her, Carloville was gone, and entreated her to return with them to the Caſtle. After repeated aſſurances of his departure ſhe conſented; but now ſhe recollected dropping in her flight one of the keys with which ſhe had furniſhed herſelf from a nail in the library, which proved to be that one that opened the door of the tower into the park. As the event proved, the loſs was not a ſerious one. Though both the ſervants dreaded the neceſſity of returning through the vaulted paſſage to the Caſtle, and would willingly have choſen any other; yet upon deliberation it occurred to them, the gates of the Caſtle were ſtill more inacceſſible from without, than that of the tower from within. They reluctantly deſcended the ſtairs of the vault, and, after much complaining and fatigue, once more found themſelves and Ethelreda, by the grey twilight of the morning, ſafe in the library.

For ſome moments the timorous ſervants could expreſs nothing but ſurpriſe at Ethelreda's aſtoniſhing courage, in venturing into the cavern, particularly as ſhe told them its exiſtence was only known to her by her father's report. She told them too, it was her original intention to have diſcovered the ſubterraneous paſſage to Carloville, and to have propoſed the watch-tower, on account of its communication with the Caſtle, and its being uſeleſs and unfrequented, for her future reſidence. But ſince he had been ſo eaſily exaſperated to break his firſt promiſe, ſhe rejoiced in the accident of his being ſtill ignorant of this vault, which none could diſcover to him but Llewellyn and his wife, both of whom ſhe called upon for a promiſe of ſecrecy, which they readily gave;

gave; and which ſhe had every reaſon to believe, when once given, they would hold inviolably ſacred.

Ethelreda took this precaution, becauſe ſhe apprehended both Winifred and Llewellyn would revolt againſt the reſolution ſhe was about to communicate to them, and hold it their duty, unleſs bound by promiſes to the contrary, to divulge the place of her retreat to her ſiſter or Mr. Harwood; whilſt on the other hand ſhe was deſirous that not only her abode, but her very name, ſhould be forgotten and unknown. The watch-tower had once been fitted up by Sir Roger for the reſidence of his game-keeper; but not long before his death he had furniture brought him from the Caſtle for his own accommodation.—There he uſed to paſs ſometimes three days together unſeen by his family, from whence his ſudden return to his own apartment without the knowlege of the vigilant porter, was matter of great ſpeculation amongſt the ſervants, to whom this paſſage was a profound ſecret. The lower room of the tower, which communicated with the vault, was entirely ſeparated from the one over it except by a trap-door, which could eaſily be concealed by a piece of furniture.

Ethelreda, who had already arranged her plan, left the execution of it to Llewellyn, who, according to her directions, furniſhed the lower room for her reception; whilſt, in ſpite of the prayers and remonſtrances of her faithful ſervants, ſhe held herſelf in readineſs to retire to her priſon on the firſt notice of Lord Carloville's arrival.

In the mean time, however, Ethelreda paſſed her melancholy hours at large in the ſolitary rooms of the Caſtle. She wandered day after day through all thoſe apartments where ſhe had paſſed

paſſed ſo many hours with her father, the Harwoods, and Conway.

More than a month had elapſed ſince Ethelreda's arrival at this deſerted manſion: and ſtill as the ſpring advanced every moment grew more precious to her, paſſed at large within its walls; ſince every moment that fled brought her ſtill nearer to the time of her impriſonment. It was with regret indeed that ſhe looked forward to the reception of a maſter ſo unworthy within theſe venerable walls, which it was impoſſible to think of quitting, or of ſeeing for the laſt time thoſe rooms where ſhe had paſſed the happieſt hours of her youth. Yet her reſolution never wavered even in thought; ſhe applauded her own ſteadineſs, and perſuaded herſelf ſhe acted worthy the name of L'Eſterling; and even imagined, with a fanciful and romantic pride, ſhe could have ſupported, if poſſible, greater misfortunes with ſuperior fortitude when the honour of that name was concerned, or even if that name had ſtill been her own.

CHAP. XXXV.

——to wilful men,
The injuries that they themſelves procure
Muſt be their ſchoolmaſters.——

SHAKESPEARE.

LORD Carloville's firſt intention was to have returned to St. Siffrid's Caſtle immediately after his conference with Sir Francis L'Eſterling and Mr.

Mr. Harwood, in order to ſecure the perſon of Ethelreda, whoſe retreat he had left Llewellyn in ſtrict charge to diſcover. But his journey was poſtponed by the intelligence of his colleague, Lady Mariamne, who, having heard of Conway's ſudden diſappearance, made no ſcruple to ſay ſhe was aſſured Ethelreda was already under his protection.

Lady Mariamne, who intended this calumny ſhould be univerſally received for truth, in order to exaſperate the ſpirit of Carloville ſtill more againſt his unhappy wife, took particular care to ſpread the ſtory, ſo that in the courſe of a few days it came to the hearing of Mr. Conway, who hampered by his own ſchemes, could not deny the fact, as he would willingly have done to prevent its reaching his brother's family, leſt the denial ſhould lead to the knowledge of Conway's actual ſituation. Beſides, it was Lady Mariamne's intention by any means in her power to ſeparate Carloville and Ethelreda, whoſe unprotected ſtate would bring upon her, whether deſervedly or not, a ſufficient portion of the world's ill-will to ſerve her purpoſe by injuring her character. And Carloville, in whoſe happy compoſition revenge had not been forgotten (too eaſily prevailed upon by Lady Mariamne's art, and his own conſciouſneſs of Ethelreda's preference for Conway, to believe the firſt, and doubt all the ſincere promiſes and aſſurances of the latter), inſtead of returning to the Caſtle, remained in London, ſparing neither time nor vigilance to diſcover Conway's retreat, in order to ſatisfy his revenge, and make himſelf ſome atonement for the diſgraceful report, though, contrary to his expectations, it ſhould prove unfounded.

In the mean time Conway's violent and alarming diſorder continued; and the uncertain opi-

nion of his recovery, entertained by his phyſician for many days, was a ſufficient puniſhment to Mr. Conway for his unfeeling interference. He ſaw his ſon at the point of death, and with him the annihilation of all thoſe ambitious projects, the attaining of which had long been the ſolace of his leiſure, and the ſpur of his occupations. In loſing his ſon, the unfortunate motive of all his toils, he loſt the reward of a life of inquietude; ſince, inſtead of inveſting him with thoſe titles and honours he ſaw within his graſp, he beheld him in madneſs and almoſt in death, through his own falſe and erroneous opinions.

Mrs. Conway, who her whole life had been taught by her huſband to look upon every turn of his countenance as an enigma which ſhe was neither to gueſs or enquire into, ſaw his diſguiſed agitation in every feature: but ſtudied and evaſive anſwers had long given her the practice of ſeeing his uneaſineſs and embarraſſments with indifference; and though ſhe was at firſt offended at his want of confidence, her own ſenſe of conſequence, and the natural dignity of her ſentiments, uniformly reſtrained her from troubling him with queſtions; whilſt her reſentment of his conduct which was indeed an inſult to a woman of diſcretion and abilities like Mrs. Conway, made her follow his example, ſo that they ſcarcely ever converſed but on common topics, when company obliged them to meet; for their hours of retirement were ſeldom paſſed together, except when Conway joined them, as his ſociety was equally agreeable to both.

Mrs. Conway had always correſponded with her ſon; ſhe was therefore much ſurpriſed at his ſilence, and, ſometimes giving way to fears for his ſafety, was ſeriouſly diſtreſſed at it: but as Mr.

Mr. Conway was the *laſt* perſon whom ſhe would have thought of burdening with her anxiety, ſhe endeavoured to conſole herſelf with patience. But patience itſelf may be exhauſted; and even Mrs. Conway, though unuſed to complain, could not avoid mentioning her ſon's ſilence one morning, in a viſit to her new niece, Lady Caerleon, in hopes ſomebody would take the trouble to account for it.

Lady Mariamne L'Eſterling was preſent, who with wonderful malice and addreſs immediately undertook to prove to Mrs. Conway, that nothing could be more unreaſonable than to expect a letter from her ſon, whilſt his whole time and attention were taken up by Lady Carloville. "The novelty will wear off," continued ſhe, "and then our *conſtant* couſin may perhaps find leiſure to write to his relations."

One ſtory was equally new to Mrs. Conway as the other: and Lady Mariamne, with many expreſſions of ſurpriſe at Mrs. Conway's ignorance, and of ſorrow at being the firſt to tell it, related the whole; not forgetting to add, it was univerſally received for truth in the *world*, that the lady had demanded the protection of Captain Conway.

"And that you know," ſaid Lady Octavia, who ſat by her ſiſter, "a man of *common* gallantry could not have refuſed."

"I thought YOU, Lady Octavia, did not allow Conway to be a man of common gallantry."

"Of common civility, you mean," ſaid ſhe, colouring.

Mrs. Conway's ſorrow at ſome parts of this ſtory, did not prevent her from ſhewing her anger and indignation at others which ſhe gueſſed to be Lady Mariamne's embelliſhments. She

would have vindicated Ethelreda with all the warmth of a parent had ſhe not felt too much contempt for her nieces, to think it neceſſary. Her ſentiments indeed were partly expreſſed on her countenance, when ſhe cautioned Lady Mariamne againſt making a point of telling this ſtory, leſt, when it was cleared up, the diſcredit of having raiſed ſuch a fiction ſhould *undeſervedly* caſt a blemiſh upon her character for veracity and good nature.

"How I hate Mrs. Conway!" exclaimed Octavia almoſt before ſhe was out of the room. Lady Mariamne had too much prudence to ſay, "And ſo do I"—though ſhe was obliged to bite her lip, in order to prevent herſelf from exclamations; for the ſarcaſm of Mrs. Conway's advice, which pointed directly at her principal foibles, was not loſt upon her, though ſhe would ſcarcely have been reformed at the remonſtrances of an angel.

Whilſt Conway's danger laſted, Mr. Conway made numberleſs reſolutions never to interfere with him for the future, provided his reaſon was reſtored. But, like the temporiſing promiſe of people in affliction, Mr. Conway no ſooner heard from Dr. Felton, that Conway was able to begin his journey to Frampton Lodge, than all the worldly advantages he had ſo long been accuſtomed to contemplate, returned to direct his wiſhes to their original object. He therefore left to the Doctor the whole charge of the patient, who had been prevailed on to accompany him, and employed himſelf in diſcouraging the report of his ſon and Lady Carloville, which he concluded he might ſafely do after he was removed. This however had no other effect upon the minds of the generality than to revive the ſtory, which having been near three weeks in circulation,

tion, was beginning to give way to ſome newer topic. Through Sir Francis L'Eſterling, Mr. Conway's flat contradiction of the ſlander was conveyed to Lord Carloville, who believed, or very readily appeared to believe, the whole a falſehood, upon Mr. Conway's authority. He accordingly made preparations for his departure for the Caſtle, in ſome faint hopes of finding Ethelreda concealed in one of the cottages in the village. But his ſtay in town was ſome time prolonged by the proceedings of Mr. Carloville; who, though he did not diſpute the identity of his brother's perſon, was not inclined to be quietly diſpoſſeſſed of all the eſtates which he had ſo long conſidered as his own; and as wills are conſtrued according to the *ſpirit*, the frequent ſpaces in that of the late Lord Carloville ſufficiently explained the intention of the teſtator, who evidently, when it was made, did not mean to exclude either ſon from a ſhare in his poſſeſſions. Upon this ſuppoſition Mr. Carloville founded his claim, which however his lordſhip was by no means diſpoſed to allow; for it was one of his favourite maxims, that without compulſion no one need part with what they chooſe to keep! Having therefore put the matter upon the iſſue of a law-ſuit, in anſwer to his brother's claim, and refuſal to give up the eſtates in his poſſeſſion but with a compromiſe, he was obliged to remain ſome time longer in London in order to adviſe with his counſel.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Portes, grilles, verroux, gardes, captivité,
Ténèbres, ſolitude, effroi, chagrin, ſouffrance;
Puis que j'aie dans les fers un cœur en liberté,
En vain vous vous joignez pour vaincre ma conſtance.

DRELINCOURT.

THIS temporary delay was not however of any material ſervice to Ethelreda; for though the arrival of Lord Carloville was deferred much beyond her expectations, it was nevertheleſs certain at laſt; of which truth the arrival of part of his houſehold at the end of another month convinced her.

Ethelreda was muſing through the dim painted windows of the hall, when the ſtill ſilence of the evening was interrupted by the ſound of voices and loud knockings at the gate of the Caſtle court. She ſtarted, firſt more from ſurpriſe than fear; for the ſound of talking was become ſo unuſual within the Caſtle, that ſhe was ſtruck with the novelty almoſt without knowing what had alarmed her; for almoſt weeks had paſſed without her hearing any other ſound than the echo of Llewellyn's footſteps. But Llewellyn, more aware of the intruſion, immediately warned his miſtreſs to retire to the library, where he promiſed to attend her after he had diſpoſed of the new comers.

Poor Ethelreda's fortitude was not ſo powerful a ſupport as ſhe fancied it would have been; for ſhe

ſhe could not think without ſhuddering, of the diſmal habitation that awaited her reception; where ſhe was to ſpend perhaps *all* the remainder of her life without ſociety, and probably to be as much forgotten by thoſe who had once called themſelves her friends, as if ſhe had never exiſted. In this apprehenſion, however, Ethelreda neither included Conway nor her ſiſter; ſince all her ſufferings were doubled when ſhe thought of them, and of her own, to them, myſterious diſappearance.

In the midſt of her diſtreſſes her beſt conſolation was, that, deprived as ſhe ſhould be of wholeſome air, of exerciſe, and almoſt of light, added to the hopeleſs ſolitude of her dungeon, her life could not be a long one, particularly as her health, in ſpite of the ſtrength of her conſtitution and her youth, was already declining.

Whilſt Ethelreda ſat with her face on her hand, reflecting on the melancholy events of her ſhort life, which ſeemed as it were in its laſt ſtage, the evening grew dark, and two hours after night-fall Winifred and Llewellyn came to conduct her to her priſon. Ethelreda rubbed her eyes at ſight of the lantern which Llewellyn had provided for their ſubterraneous journey; and trying to ſmile, in order to raiſe the ſpirits of her weeping companions, ſhe reached out her hand to take leave of them and to decline their attendance, unable to ſpeak, and fearful of truſting her voice leſt ſhe ſhould add to their diſtreſs.

Neither Llewellyn nor Winifred could utter a word in reply to this ſilent diſmiſſion, which neither, accuſtomed as they were to implicit obedience, was diſpoſed to take. They preceded their miſtreſs in undiſguiſed ſorrow: and Ethelreda, too much overcome by her own misfortunes

to

to exert her authority, ſuffered them to accompany her, though their grief conſiderably added to hers.

They had performed more than half their journey, when Llewellyn, whoſe fears were not quite ſo ſtrong as on a former occaſion, having looked on each ſide as he went, ſtopped ſuddenly, ſtartled and alarmed at ſeeing on the right hand an arched entrance to another paſſage. Ethelreda was about to aſk why he heſitated to proceed, when ſhe perceived, by holding up the light, they had ſtill much to examine and diſcover before ſhe could think herſelf ſecure in her new retreat. She ſaw reluctance and fear in the countenances of her companions: fatigued and deſponding as ſhe was, ſhe would willingly have diſmiſſed the two ſervants, though ſhe was determined to go on, and fixed in her reſolution not to quit the Caſtle whilſt there was an appearance of ſecurity within its walls. Her ſpirits were, however, too weak to diſpute with them, though ſhe was deſirous of ſparing them ſo much toil. After a trifling altercation, in which Llewellyn and Winifred ſtill perſiſted in following her, Ethelreda boldly went forward to explore theſe unknown and deſolate vaults. Notwithſtanding her courage, the idea that ſhe was taking poſſeſſion of her grave had fixed itſelf upon her mind from the moment of her entrance. As ſhe proceeded through this ſtill unknown vault, which ſhe could perceive gradually deſcended, the terrifying fancy fixed itſelf more firmly on her imagination, her blood was chilled, and ſhe had nearly ſhrieked with horror at the expectation of finding herſelf in ſome frightful charnel filled with ſkulls and heaps of mouldering bones.

So many ſhocking images had nearly taken from Ethelreda the power of proceeding, when her

her progreſs was interrupted by ſteps. She was at once in ſome degree relieved from her terror, as ſhe concluded from that circumſtance it could be nothing more than a nearer way to the tower than that they had hitherto uſed: ſhe did not therefore heſitate to aſcend; but having gained the top of the ſteps, both Ethelreda and Llewellyn were ſurpriſed at finding they could proceed no further than a ſmall low arch at their termination, which prevented them from ſtanding upright. Llewellyn examined it on every ſide by the light of his lantern; and unable to diſcover how the arch was cloſed, ſince it did not appear to be either a wall or door that impeded their progreſs, he touched it with his hands, and immediately perceived that a kind of curtain or drapery of ſome cumbrous texture ſurrounded them. He found no difficulty in lifting it up, and immediately diſcovered, by the aſſiſtance of a pale gleam of moon-light which ſhot through a window at the weſt-end, that they were in the church of St. Siffrid, within the rail of the communion table, and that the aperture by which they entered was concealed by the velvet hangings that adorned the altar and covered the communion table.

Upon caſting her eyes round, Ethelreda preſently perceived where ſhe was: at the ſame inſtant a thouſand terrible recollections ruſhed into her mind; ſhe could not but remember the laſt time ſhe had approached that altar under ſuch inauſpicious omens; all her melancholy forebodings were more than verified; and though her anticipating fears had never ſuggeſted any misfortune equal to the return of Carloville, yet at that very moment ſhe thought he was in the Caſtle.

Winifred and Llewellyn, already almoſt petrified with the ſcene they had gone through, kept

their eyes fixed upon their miſtreſs. Ethelreda attempted to ſpeak to them; they perceived her lips move, but heard no ſound; her pale countenance changed to the moſt deathly white; her eyes loſt their luſtre—then cloſed, and ſhe dropped on the pavement.

Winifred ſhrieked ſo loud at ſeeing her fall, that the whole church echoed. She fell upon her knees, and, taking one of her hands, as inſtantly quitted it, chilled with fear at its coldneſs. In vain ſhe attempted to raiſe her: the weight of death ſeemed to have fixed her to the ground. Both ſervants gave way to loud and clamorous lamentations, without fear of diſturbing their miſtreſs's laſt moments, for they concluded ſhe was already dead. It was therefore without the ſmalleſt aſſiſtance from Winifred that ſhe recovered from her fainting, who ſcarcely knew how to truſt her ſenſes when ſhe ſaw Ethelreda once more open her eyes. The fainting ſeemed to have deprived her of all her remaining ſtrength; it was with extreme difficulty the two terrified and feeble ſervants could ſupport her down the ſteps into the vault; ſlowly, and with many pauſes, they at length reached the tower. Here the exhauſted Ethelreda was in danger of relapſing, till at Winifred's entreaty ſhe was prevailed on to ſwallow a little water. By degrees ſhe grew more compoſed, and at laſt, ſo far recovered her calmneſs, as to commend the judicious manner in which Llewellyn had furniſhed her priſon, and to enquire about the new inhabitants of the Caſtle.

Llewellyn hitherto had forborne to tell Ethelreda that only the ſervants were arrived: he was too much hurt at his miſtreſs's fallen dignity, to think with patience of her being obliged to give way

way to them, and he thought to ſpare her ſome mortification in letting her ſuppoſe it was Lord Carloville himſelf.

"Llewellyn!" ſaid ſhe, heſitating, as if ſhe were afraid to hear——"Does your lord ſleep in my father's apartment?"

The bare idea was too much for Llewellyn; the old man repeated in a broken voice, "*My lord?*——Oh, madam! call me *your* ſervant; the bounty of good Sir Roger will prevent me from wanting the wages of a new maſter."——At that moment Llewellyn made an inward reſolution never to receive any thing from the new lord of the Caſtle, with all the ancient ſpirit and obſtinacy of his nation.

Ethelreda was affected at the old man's warmth; ſhe tried to conſole him by expreſſions of gratitude for having conſented to paſs his life in a ſervice ſo repugnant to him, for her ſake; and Llewellyn, thinking himſelf overpaid by the thanks of his miſtreſs, was at length prevailed upon, together with Winifred, to retire to the Caſtle, and leave Ethelreda to her new and extraordinary ſolitude.

It was not from a deſire of ſleeping herſelf, that Ethelreda was in haſte to diſmiſs her attendants, though ſhe was anxious they ſhould reſt after their fatiguing ſervice; the novelty joined to the drearineſs of her ſituation took away her wearineſs. The whole choice of the furniture had been left to Llewellyn; Ethelreda had never once interfered in the arrangement; and though Llewellyn had requeſted to know what books ſhe choſe, theſe too were left to his judgment. He had therefore removed part of the moſt ancient of the Caſtle furniture, at leaſt, that from its ſize was moveable, becauſe he knew Sir Roger always preferred it. By the ſide of the antique canopied

canopied bed, ſtood a not leſs venerable table; over which hung a braſs lamp with all its appurtenances, not *very* ancient certainly, but one of thoſe that had been in common uſe in the Caſtle in the laſt century. Not far from the table was placed an oak chair carved in various emblems, and alluſions to ſacred ſtory. The grated window, already nearly choaked with ivy, Llewellyn had further ſecured from admitting the rain by a caſement of painted glaſs, which he preferred becauſe the L'Eſterling arms were ſtill viſible and unimpaired upon it.

After having beſtowed particular attention on every article of her new houſehold, Ethelreda thought of her library. She preſently perceived it was a copious, though not a voluminous one. On caſting her eyes towards the table, ſhe ſaw one large book, which from its outſide ſhe preſently knew to be her father's bible, the ſame that had raiſed Llewellyn's ſcruples in the library. Ethelreda opened the cover, and in the blank leaf at the beginning ſhe ſaw regiſtered all the births and marriages of her family. Her own name was there: it reminded her ſhe was now in her twentieth year; which ſhe looked upon as the laſt of her exiſtence, ſince the dreary remainder would be breathed away in ſolitude and repining. But when ſhe read the date of her unfortunate marriage, the laſt writing in her father's hand, all her melancholy but almoſt calm reflections gave way to grief and paſſion. She haſtily ſhut the book, and, burſting into tears, dropped upon her knees, exhauſting her already weakened ſpirits in complaining of her deſtiny, and in prayers for her releaſe; till, worn out by fatigue and exertion, her head dropped upon her hands, and towards morning ſhe fell aſleep.

It was late before Ethelreda awoke; for no ray of ſunſhine penetrated through the gloomy window to diſturb her ſlumbers. Too much occupied by deeper ſorrows, ſhe no longer lamented having ſeen for the laſt time the bright light of day, or that ſhe had for ever taken leave of the cool and healthful breezes of the morning: ſhe even comforted herſelf with the idea that each of theſe circumſtances would contribute to ſhorten the length of her confinement; and before Winifred and Llewellyn came to pay their evening attendance, ſhe had ſettled the manner of her funeral.

The viſible depreſſion of the two ſervants did not however eſcape her notice. It was not without much enquiry they were prevailed on to tell the cauſe: at laſt they confeſſed Lord Carloville arrived only that morning; that his threats and anger, at finding from Llewellyn that Ethelreda was yet undiſcovered, had terrified both him and Winifred, but they were ſtill more alarmed at his intention of diſmiſſing them; than at his menaces and execrations, adding, that he had declared he would ſpare no means to ſecure her perſon.

Ethelreda ſhuddered at this intelligence, and at the ſame time felt happy at having ſo effectually eſcaped her tyrant. She conſidered that, ſhould Carloville put his threats in execution with regard to the ſervants, it would always be in her power to retire undiſcovered from the watch-tower; and though ſhe dreaded being driven to ſuch an extremity, the conſoling reflection that ſhe was not as unfortunate as ſhe might have been, contributed to calm her mind, and to make her look round her priſon with a ſort of pleaſure. With many expreſſions of anxiety for the trouble in which ſhe had involved Winifred and Llewellyn, Ethelreda particularly recommended them

to be circumſpect in their attendance, as they in all probability would be watched with a jealous eye by their lord; and in order to avoid ſuſpicion, ſhe requeſted they would bring her ſupplies in larger quantities, and make fewer viſits.

Having given directions ſo neceſſary for her future ſafety, which, as ſhe imagined, would ſecure it, Ethelreda, after the departure of her viſitors, approached her bible without any of thoſe emotions that had ſo much diſturbed her the preceding night. Llewellyn would have added her harp and muſic; but theſe Ethelreda had forbidden, and had deſired to have inſtead an Æolian harp, which belonged to her father. This ſhe placed at the door of her dungeon, where the wind, ruſhing through the long narrow paſſages, produced upon its ſtrings a wild and penſive melody; and it was not till the crowing of the firſt cock, that, unfatigued with her ſtudies and charmed by the muſic, ſhe would think of repoſe.

Thus without the ſmalleſt variation, ſetting aſide the occaſional viſits of the two ſervants, paſſed the days and nights of Ethelreda. To her equal ſatisfaction and aſtoniſhment, neither of them had heard further of their intended diſmiſſion. Of any of the occurrences in the Caſtle or its neighbourhood ſhe never enquired; ſtudiouſly avoiding all converſation that might lead to names which ſhe flattered herſelf might in time become indifferent to her, ſince her duty and her repoſe equally required it.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.